

THE
DESIGN
OF
CHRISTIANITY:
OR,

A plain Demonstration, that the including Men with *inward, real* Righteousness (or true Holiness) was the *ultimate End* of our SAVIOUR'S coming into the World; and is the *great Intention* of his blessed Gospel.

By EDWARD FOWLER, A.M.
Rector of North-hill in Bedfordshire; and afterwards Lord Bishop
of Gloucester.

He that followeth me shall not walk in Darkneſs.
John viii. 12.

πρακτικὸς, ἔ' μεθδικὸς ὢν ὁ Παιδαγωγὸς ἡ καὶ τὸ τέλος
αὐτῆ βελτιῶσαι τὴν ψυχὴν ἐξῆ, ἔ' διδάξαι σῶφρονός
τε, ἔκ ἐπισημονικῆ καθηγῆσασθαι βίᾱ.

S. Clem. Alexandr. *Pædag.*

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and *Crown* in St. Paul's Church-yard.

M DCC LX.

TO THE
BOOKSELLER,



Imprimatur.

Rob. Grove, R. P. Dom. Episc.
Lond. a sacris Domesticis.

April 17, 1671.

TO THE
BOOKSELLER,

On the Republication of

Bishop FOWLER'S

DESIGN OF CHRISTIANITY.

SIR,

YOU are now, as I am informed, reprinting that inestimable Book, *Bishop Fowler's Design of Christianity*. I have particular, and very strong Reasons; to believe, that your principal Inducement to this, has not been any lucrative or selfish View: but the full Persuasion of your own Mind, and the Testimony of Persons in whose Integrity and Judgment you dare confide; concerning the Piety and Learning of the Author; the Excellence of the Work itself; its Importance to every Christian; and the particular Want of it in the Age wherein we live. Give me Leave therefore to congratulate you, as the happy Instrument in a Republication, which, by the Blessing of God may prove of very great and general Use; and which seems to have taken its Rise from Motives similar to those which first gave Birth to the Treatise itself.

The celebrated Author of the *Biographia Britannica*, in his Notes annexed to the Catalogue which he gives of the Works of this truly primitive Bishop, makes the following Remark——

“ *The Value of these most excellent Books have been little understood, else they would have borne more Impressions than they have.*”——

There are indeed few Men of sound Learning, and true Piety, who have been acquainted with Bishop Fowler's Works, but will join the Sentiments of the ingenious Writer above-mentioned. There may be, and let us also hope, that there will be a Time, when *these* shall be diligently sought after, carefully collected, and preserved intire to Posterity. You have made a generous Step towards it; and whosoever may hereafter have the Honour of completely executing so desirable a Plan, your Foundation must have its Use and its Reward. That both these may be ample, and the former of them become daily more manifest, is my ardent Prayer and very sincere Wish.

The eminent and truly reverend Author of the following Treatise is too much known in the learned World, to stand in need of a Character here; especially as such Particulars of his Life, as could be collected, have been lately inserted amongst those of the most illustrious Persons whom this Kingdom has produced. The best Knowledge of him is to be had from his Works, in which let not the Reader look for the Graces of Oratory, which were by no means the Object of this

of the Design of Christianity. v

this excellent Person's Attention. Indeed the Strength of his Judgment, and Weight of his Reasonings, are so much superior to his Diction and Stile, that the latter will appear to a Disadvantage upon the Comparison. Yet howsoever unpolished in divers Places, he is intelligible, clear, and nervous in all; never puerile, frothy or trifling. * He lived in times of great Discord and Un-

* For the Satisfaction of such as have not Opportunities of consulting the *Biographia Britannica*, in the third Volume of which the Reader may meet with Bishop Fowler's Life, it may not be improper to insert the following Particulars, chiefly extracted from thence.—Dr. Edward Fowler was born at *Westerleigh* in *Gloucestershire*, in the Year 1632, and died in the Year 1714, in the 82d Year of his Age. His excellent Writings soon made him considerable, and procured him Preferment in *London*. He was successively Rector of *Allhallows's, Bread-street*, and *St. Giles's, Cripplegate*. In the Year 1675, he was installed Prebendary of *Gloucester*; of which See in 1691, he became the worthy Bishop, and continued in it without any Translation to the time of his Death. He appeared early as an Advocate for vital and practical Holiness, against the *Antinomians*; and afterwards, in the Reign of King *James the Second*, when Popery, supported by the Countenance and all the Power of a Court, was making formidable Advances, he was one of those Champions, who stood up and signalized themselves in Defence of the Protestant Religion, and of the Church whereof he was a Member. This Con-

Uncharitableness in Matters of Religion, which were too often prostituted to serve political Views and secular Interests. As his great Talents made him conspicuous, his Attempts to confute Errors, to reconcile Differences, and revive the true Spirit of Christianity, drew upon him much Hatred and Abuse from Bigots and Enthusiasts. Unmoved with personal Indignities, he persisted in the Paths of Candor and Charity; and to wash off the Stains of Prejudice, gently led his Opponents to the

duct rendered him equally obnoxious to Papists and Sectaries, and to their several Adherents. It fared with him, as it will do with all, who from the Superiority of their Understanding, and the Candor of their Heart, will not be influenced by the narrow Views of Party Interest, nor swim with the Stream of popular Prejudice, but are determined to pursue Truth wheresoever it may be found.—He was branded, on one Side, as a pestilent Heretick; on the other, as a Degrader of God's Grace, and a meer Moralist. His Enemies proceeded so far as to commence a Prosecution against him, and we are told that they even obtained a *Suspension*, founded upon such Allegations, and attended with such Consequences, as may at the same time serve to distinguish the Complexion of those times, the Spirit of the Prosecutors, and the immoveable Constancy of that faithful Servant, who relies upon this Assurance given by his Master, “† *Blessed are ye when Men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of Evil against you falsely for my Sake.*”

† Matt. v. 11.

clear

clear Fountain Head, exhibiting to their View
THE DESIGN OF CHRISTIANITY.

This most gracious and amazing Design, formed by infinite Wisdom and infinite Goodness, to produce *Glory to God in the Highest, Peace on Earth, and good Will towards Men*; GLORY and PEACE which surpass all human Understanding; GOOD WILL, no less than the Pardon of every Transgression, Exemption from all Punishment; Reconciliation with our Creator; and the purifying and fitting Mankind by Holiness here, for eternal Happiness hereafter; how frequently is it forgot, how grossly misunderstood, and how lamentably perverted! No sooner was the good Seed sown, but the subtle Adversary of Souls hastened to intermix his Tares, nor can they be separated till the Harvest is completed. Christ and his Apostles have plainly taught, that the Requisites to Salvation are *Repentance, Faith, and Obedience*.—So far, Christians seem universally to agree. Proceed a little further to illustrate or explain these, and the divine Simplicity of the Gospel is too often lost in the Inventions of Men. New Titles and Systems, with infinite Divisions and Distinctions instantly arise. The enlightened Interpreter of *Paul*, the rational Pupil of *Apollos*, the infallible Successor of *Cephas*, and the *sole chosen* Follower of Christ, can by no means agree about the Signification of Words, or the Identity of things. Differences upon Points for the most Part speculative and fruitless, have been found

sadly to diminish, if not totally to destroy those essential Qualities of mutual Love and Charity, which our blessed Saviour has declared to be the Badge or distinguishing Mark of his Disciples. As we all have the same Creator, Preserver, and Father, the same Redeemer, and the same Sanctifier, are all of us Candidates for the same Heaven? and acknowledge that *Holiness* is the Path which leads to it? why do we fall out by the Way, or labour to divide it into different Branches? The Apostle St. *James* will resolve this Question, as he does another nearly related to it, to our great Reproach and Shame, *Jam. iv. 1.*—Would every Man rest contented to employ and improve in the best manner that he can, that Talent or Portion of Judgment and Knowledge which it has pleased God to bestow upon him, the Scriptures alone are able to make him wise unto Salvation. If he does not find in himself an evil Heart of Unbelief, but is firmly persuaded therein is eternal Life (and none who is destitute of this Persuasion can pretend to stile himself a Christian) let him diligently consult this only infallible Directory, that he may † give a Reason of the Hope that is in him: but still, according to the Apostle's Exhortation, be careful to offer that Reason, not presumptuously, but with Meekness and Fear. None would then say unto his Brother, Thou Fool, for an involuntary, and perhaps an insurmountable, Difference in Opinion; nor † doat about Questions and Strifes of Words, whereof cometh Envy, Railings, and perverse Disputings.

† 1 Pet. iii. 15.

† 1 Tim. vi. 4.

Then

Then, indeed, might we hope to keep *the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace*. But how shall the *wayfaring Man* discern his Path, if he attends to those endless Mazes of Controversy, which lie open to his View on every Side? Especially, as he will find each particular Sect, not only censuring and railing at, but audaciously judging, and passing Sentence of Damnation upon all the rest; whilst Infidels exult, and cry, *Ah! so would we have it*. These are Reflexions, no less obvious than alarming, in the present State of Christianity, insomuch that the Observation made of the primitive Christians, which raised so much Astonishment in their Heathen Persecutors, *Ecce quomodo se mutuo diligunt!* * would now be the bitterest Sarcasm that their Adversaries could utter. The Prevention of these Evils, so far as depends upon human Endeavours, is attentively to consider, as well the *Means* as the *End*, of the Gospel Dispensation. In this important and necessary Enquiry, we shall be happily assisted by the pious Author of this Book. All his Reasonings are taken from Scripture: he forms no Design or System of his own, but most powerfully and clearly explains that of Christ; nor does he claim our Attention further, than he *speaks forth the Words of Truth and Soberness*. If he understands and interprets a Text differently from what *Calvin* did, no Admirer of that zealous Reformer has Cause to be angry. *Calvin him-*

* See how they love one another!

self (now we hope in the Regions of Peace and Bliss) would scarce have been so, if living: or if he had, would only have shewn an Instance of that Frailty, from which the best of Men are not wholly exempt. To confine the Title of *Evangelical Teacher* to any one Man who has distinguished himself by particular Tenets, or to the Maintainers of those Tenets only, favours too much of human Arrogance. *If any Man will do his Will, he shall know of the Doctrine whether it be of God*, says the blessed Jesus. He will know it from the Testimony of a good Conscience, from the Steadiness of that Structure which is founded upon a Rock, and from the Fruits which are produced by his Faith in Jesus Christ. The Comforter will dwell within and abide with him; but how far the Assurance or Persuasion of his Mind is supernatural or rational, either in general, or in any particular Instance, might be a fruitless, and at the same time a very presumptuous Enquiry. All that should influence our Conduct as rational Creatures, endued with *certain Powers*, but those confined within *very narrow Limits*, our great and gracious Creator has been pleased to write in legible Characters, so that *he who runs may read*. Let us then attend to that most excellent Advice given by *Eliphaz* in *Job*, and to the necessary Caution which he subjoins, † *Remember that thou magnify his Work, which Men behold. Every Man may see it; Man may behold it afar off*. Still re-

† *Job xxxvi. 24, 25, 26.*

member

member likewise, that *God is great, and we know him not.* We know not, nor is it possible we should ever thoroughly comprehend, his Operations, Councils or Decrees. Sufficient for such weak Creatures is the Knowledge that they all flow from his immutable Attributes, and that these are the utmost Perfection of Wisdom, Justice and Goodness. * *Is not my Way equal? Are not your Ways unequal?* is the tender Expostulation of the God of Mercy and Truth. Reflexions of this Kind might teach us to confine our Researches within the Compass of human Faculties, and instead of vilifying or decrying these, to labour that we may employ them to the Glory and Praise of the Giver, which is inseparably connected with our own supreme Good and Happiness.

Possibly, in this unbelieving and dissolute Age, there has not appeared a Work more destructive to Religion, than that artful one intitled, *Christianity not founded on Argument.* Numbers have read it, who through the specious Gilding, could scarce discern the Poison. Had the Title been more plainly this; *Christianity neither consistent with Reason nor Common-sense,* it had done less Harm; for every Christian, who would venture to read it, would have known what to expect, and have been upon his Guard. It would be well if those devout and well meaning Persons who are abundantly fond of whatsoever appears mysterious,

* Ezek. xviii. 25.

would

would consider how far they are serving that Cause, which from their Hearts they detest; whensoever they intemperately rail at human Understanding, and debase human Power. The great, the adorable, and impenetrable *Mystery of Godliness* (ever impenetrable to Men, to Angels, and all created Beings) is this, *God manifest in the Flesh*. But is the End and Design of this mysterious Incarnation, itself a Mystery? when the Voice of God has declared, that * *for this Purpose the Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the Works of the Devil*; and that † *the Grace of God which bringeth Salvation, hath appeared unto all Men, teaching us that denying Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present World; looking for the blessed Hope, and the glorious Appearance of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all Iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar People, zealous of good Works*.—Obedience is the End, the Effect, the necessary Consequence, and the inseparable Concomitant of Faith, or Faith is no longer living, but dead. But still what Claim of Right, what Plea of Merit, can arise from such Obedience as Man is capable of performing?—Assuredly none. *Doth the Lord thank that Servant because he did those things which were commanded? I trow not.—When ye shall have done all these things which were*

* 1 John iii. 8.

† Titus ii. 11, 12, &c.

of the Design of Christianity. xiii

manded, say, we are unprofitable Servants, we have done that which was our Duty to do.—* We can have nothing to glory of; for † our Sufficiency is of God. ‡ Every good and perfect Gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights, whose § divine Power hath given us all things that pertain unto Life and Godliness. These things are not enveloped in Darkness, but most clearly revealed; and of these we could have no Knowledge or Assurance, were it not through Faith in Christ, and in the Declarations made by himself and the Ministers of his Gospel.—If we should now be asked by an Infidel—Whether Faith, which is the Evidence of Things not seen, be, or be not, a rational Persuasion, more or less intense, according to the Stability of those Grounds whereupon we apprehend it to be founded, what are we to answer? A Teacher who styles himself Evangelical would probably start at the Word RATIONAL, and protest against it. Let us then seek for a better, a more satisfactory, and clearer Definition of FAITH.—|| A truly amiable and devout Advocate for the All-sufficiency of Christ's imputed Righteousness, and most elegant Writer, now with God (I mean the late Reverend Mr. James Hervey) in his Ex-

* 1 Cor. ix. 16. † 2 Cor. iii. 5. ‡ Jam. i. 17. § 2 Pet. i. 3. || See Mr. Hervey's Prefatory Recommendation prefixed to Mr. Marshall's Gospel Mystery of Sanctification, p. 6, 7. printed for Mr. J. Rivington, Price Three Shillings.

planation of the applauded Doctrine and Work of the Reverend Mr. *Marshall* on Sanctification, defines it thus : “ Faith is a real Persuasion, that
 “ GOD is pleased to give Christ and his Salvation ; to give him freely, without any recommending Qualifications or preparatory Conditions ; to give him, not to some Sinners only, but to *me* a Sinner in particular.—It is likewise
 “ an actual receiving of Christ, with all the Benefits, Privileges, and Promises of the Gospel, in pursuance of the Divine Gift, and on no other Warrant but the Divine Grant.”—This last Office is particularly insisted on, as “ an essential Part, or as the *principal* Act of Faith. To perform which, there is no *rational*, no *possible*
 “ Way, unless we do, in some measure, assure ourselves that Christ and his Salvation are ours.”
 —At the same time we are cautioned against the Error of imagining, “ * that we are able to produce Faith in ourselves by any Power of our own.”—And it is asserted “ that the Spirit of God habitually disposes and inclines our Hearts to a right Performance of this important Act.”
 —Yet, “ that we must not expect to have Faith wrought in us by some *Fatality of supernatural Operation*, without any Application or Endeavour of our own ; but that we must make it *our diligent Endeavour* to believe in Christ.”
 —From these Quotations out of the Works

* See Mr. *Hervey's* Note, p. 7.

of Men attached indeed to a particular System, but truly eminent for Learning and Piety, have we obtained more clear and satisfactory Ideas; and can we better determine whether the Definition of Faith, as a *rational Persuasion*, may be admitted, or must be rejected; as also whether any Man is able, or not able, to do any thing towards obtaining a true and saving Faith?—Let every one answer these Questions to himself.—

We will now, from the same highly applauded Author*, collect a few Sentiments relative to OBEDIENCE; not with a Design to criticize upon a sincere and truly pious Writer, but to examine what the Christian Cause gains by Tenets †, “*something new and out of the common Road.*”—

‡ “Some, says he, are so near the Kingdom of God, whilst they continue in a natural State; they are convinced of the Spirituality of the Law, that it bindeth us principally to love God with all our Heart, Soul, Mind, and Strength; and to love our Neighbour as ourselves, and to perform universal Obedience to God, in all our inward Thoughts and Affections, as well as in all our outward Actions, and to do all the Duties that we owe to our Neighbour, out of this hearty Love. And they struggle and labour with great Earnestness to

* *Marshal on Sanctification.* † Mr. Hervey's Prefatory Recommendation to *Marshal*, p. 11.

‡ *Marshal on Sanctification*, p. 79, 80.

“ subdue their inward Thoughts and Affections
“ to the Law of God, and to abstain, not only
“ from *some Sins*, but from *all known Sins*; and to
“ perform every known Duty of the Law, with
“ their whole Heart and Soul as they think, and
“ are so active and intent in their devout Practice,
“ that they overwork their natural Strength;
“ and so *fervent in their Zeal*, that they are ready
“ even to kill their Bodies with Fastings and
“ other Macerations, that they may kill their
“ sinful Lusts. They are strongly convinced that
“ Holiness is absolutely necessary to Salvation,
“ and deeply affected with the Terrors of Damnation;
“ and yet they were never so much enlightened in the Mystery of the Gospel as to
“ know, that a new State in Christ is necessary
“ to a new Life; therefore they labour in vain
“ to reform their natural State, instead of getting
“ above it in Christ.”—This is a very striking
Description; and from the Terms of it, could
never be intended for the Reprehension of those,
who depend upon outward Acts, Ceremonies and
Forms, or the OPERA OPERATA: such as the
Lip-labour of a certain Number of *Pater-nosters*,
or Pilgrimages, Processions, Penances, and the
like. If therefore the Meaning of it be, that
we are none of us able to do any thing towards
the great Work of our Salvation, without the
Grace and Assistance of God, it is unquestion-
ably good and sound Divinity; but the myste-
rious

rious and obscure manner of delivering it, may lay a Stumbling-block in the Way of many sincere and painful Labourers in the Vineyard of Christ. More especially, if they attend to this which follows.—“ There are many *false Opinions*, whereby such *ignorant Zealots* encourage themselves in their fruitless Endeavours. Some judge that they are able to practise Holiness, because they are not compelled to Sin, and may abstain from it if they will. To this they add, that Christ by the Merit of his Death hath restored that Freedom of Will to Good, which was lost by the Fall——and that if they endeavour to do that which lieth in them, Christ will do the rest, by assisting them with the Supplies of his saving Grace: so they trust upon *the Grace of Christ* to help them in their Endeavours. They plead further, that it would not consist with the Justice of God to punish them for Sin, if they could not avoid it, and that it would be in vain for the Ministers of the Gospel to preach to them, and exhort them to any saving Duty, if they cannot perform it.”——Many candid and charitable Men, may possibly think it too assuming to brand all these as false Opinions, and the Maintainers of them as ignorant Zealots; more particularly when a little further, upon the Subject of Original Sin, they find these Assertions: “ * Those who ac-

* *Marshal on Sanctification*, p. 89.

“ count their Impotency a sufficient Plea to ex-
 “ cuse themselves or others, shew that they
 “ were never truly humbled for that great wil-
 “ ful Transgression of all Mankind in the Loins
 “ of *Adam*. Inability to pay a Debt, excuserh
 “ not a Debtor who hath lavished away all his
 “ Estate; neither doth Drunkenness excuse the
 “ mad Actions of a Drunkard, but rather aggra-
 “ vates his Sin; and our Impotency consisteth
 “ not in a mere want of executive Power, but in the
 “ want of a willing Mind to practise true Holiness
 “ and Righteousness. Naturally we love it not,
 “ we like it not, but lust against it, and hate the
 “ Light. If Men in a natural State had a hearty
 “ Love and Liking to true Holiness, and * a De-
 “ sire and sincere Endeavour to practise it out of
 “ hearty Love, and yet failed of the Event, then
 “ they might under some Pretence plead for their
 “ Excuse (as some do for them) that they were
 “ compelled to Sin by an inevitable Fate. But
 “ none have just Cause to plead any such thing
 “ for their Excuse, because none endeavour to
 “ practise true Holiness out of hearty Love to it,
 “ until the good Work be begun in their Souls:
 “ and when God hath begun he will perfect it,
 “ and * will in the mean time accept their ready
 “ Mind, though they fall short in Performance.
 “ How abominable then and filthy is Man that
 “ drinketh Iniquity as Water, that cannot practise

* Compare these with the Description above.

"Holiness because HE WILL NOT? This is their just Condemnation, that they love Darkneſs rather than Light, &c."—Let us once more aſk, whether the poor ignorant Zealot, who has encouraged himſelf in fruitleſs Endeavours from the Opinions above deſcribed, may be able to collect, with greater Clearneſs and Certainty, from the Doctrine and Poſitions here laid down, how far he is obliged to, or capable of Obedience, and conſequently how far he is accountable or puniſhable for the Want of it?—Innumerable Quotations equally dark, perplexing, and unintelligible to many, might be made from the ſame Work, (which Charity obliges us to ſuppoſe was wrote with a truly religious Zeal for the Good of Mankind :) but ſuch are generally the Supports of a peculiar System, how well ſoever intended; and theſe had not been inſerted, were it not that a Perſon of ſuch diſtinguiſhed Piety and Meekneſs as the Recommender of it, has declared, that * "were he to be baniſhed into ſome deſolate
"Iſland, poſſeſſed only of two Books beſides his
"Bible, this ſhould be one of the two, perhaps the
"firſt that he would chooſe."

But we return to this admirable *Explication of the Design of Christianity* now republished, which we hope will not be leſs acceptable or uſeful to any unprejudiced and ſincerely pious Chriſtian, on

Hervey's Prefatory Diſcourſe to *Marſhal on Sanctification*, P. 13.

account of its being clear, rational, and demonstrative. From this Treasure of sound Divinity, the Doubtful may be informed, and the Ignorant instructed. With the Blessing of God assisting our Endeavours, we may all of us from hence learn, so to order our * *Conversation*, that it may be as becometh the Gospel of Christ, and to stand fast in One Spirit, with One Mind, striving together for the Faith of the Gospel. We may from hence be instructed, so to steer our Course, as happily to avoid the two most dangerous Rocks which lurk under opposite Extremes, and endanger the Wreck of Souls. That is to say, On the one Hand, the presumptuous and groundless Claim of † MERIT to ourselves from the Performance of any Duties; and ascribing to any Works or Endeavours of our own, what proceeds from the free Gift and Grace of God:—On the other; the absurd Supposition that there are NO FACULTIES OR POWERS imparted to us by our Creator, which we have the Freedom or Power of using; but that all our Actions, Inclinations, and Affections, are determined by supernatural Impulse, absolute Necessity, or an unchangeable Decree. The pernicious Consequences which follow from either of these Persuasions, carried to their utmost Extent, need not be enumerated. Indeed the warmest Disputants on each Side, whilst they labour hard to support their respective Systems; and, to serve that Purpose, scruple not to tear any Text from its Place, Con-

* Phil. i. 27.

† See page 10, 11.

nexion, and Context : still, would gladly drop the most flagrant, though necessary Consequences resulting from them. As few are hardy enough to adopt or maintain these, he is accounted the ablest Caluist who can best conceal or evade them : but little does this favour of the Simplicity, or Design of Christ's Gospel. Most happy would it be for us all, if in our holy Religion we were rather solicitous about the SUBSTANCE than the FORM, less intent upon Speculation and Theory in dark and disputable Matters, than upon Obedience and Practice where our Duty is no less evident than important. In these, the pure Word of God without human Comment or Refinement, will clearly and sufficiently instruct us. It will teach us that we have *natural Faculties*, but those since the Disobedience and Fall of our first Parents, extremely weak, and of themselves insufficient to produce such Obedience, and Holiness of Life, as our Christian Profession requires : that we also have *supernatural Assistances*, and those most powerful, and efficacious unto Salvation. That both the one and the other are the Gift of God : neither of them to be denied or deemed useless, but both to be gratefully acknowledged, used, and improved. That if we ask we shall receive ; if we seek we shall find ; and if we knock it shall be opened unto us. That a very great and important Work is set before us, which we are called upon to perform. That to every one that hath, (and useth) what is bestowed upon him, shall be given, and he

*shall have more Abundance ; but from the unprofitable Servant who hath not (doth not use or employ what is bestowed upon him) shall be taken away even that which he hath. Instead therefore of disputing about the Measure of each Talent, which can only be known with Certainty to the great Lord and Giver of them, it highly behoves us to be intent upon the Use of them : and, according to the Apostle's Advice, * laying aside all Malice, and all Guile, and Hypocrisies and Envy, and all evil Speakings, as new born Babes, to desire the sincere Milk of the Word, that we may grow thereby.*

But I would not longer detain the Reader from the *Treasure* now before him : which, that he may carefully peruse, maturely weigh, and practically improve, to his Advancement in Holiness here, and to the Attainment of eternal Happiness hereafter, is the earnest Desire and Prayer of

S I R,

His, and Your most sincere Well-wisher,

A. Z.

TO THE
Most Reverend Father in GOD,

GILBERT,

By Divine Providence, Lord Archbishop

O F

CANTERBURY,

Primate of all *England*, and Metropolitan;
and one of His Majesty's most Honour-
able Privy Council, &c.

May it please Your Grace,

THOUGH I am better acquainted
with my great Defects, than
fondly to imagine I can write
any thing worthy a Dedication to a
Person of so *high Dignity* and *great*
Wisdom, yet since your Concern for
the best of Religions is such as be-

[a 4]

comes

xxiv DEDICATION.

comes *him* to have *who* is its chief Minister, next under his Majesty, in the best of Churches, I have taken the Boldness for the *Subject's* sake, to prefix this Address to the following Discourse: nor can I doubt of your favourable Interpretation thereof, since your Grace is no whit less eminent for *Candor*, *generous Freedom*, and an *obliging Temper*, than for the high Place you hold in this Church and Kingdom, and the other great Accomplishments that qualify you for it.

My Lord, it is matter of great Sadness to consider how strangely the Argument that is here handled, *The Design of Christianity*, is *mistaken* by many of its Professors, and how little it is *beeded* and laid to Heart by the *Generality*. By which means it is not only become very lamentably unsuccessful to the making Men *sober*, *righteous* and *godly* (for which End it is so admirably contrived in all its Parts) but is also so fearfully abused and practised upon,

DEDICATION. xxv

is upon, as to be made the *Occasion* of
 most vile and mischievous Opinions
 and Practices: insomuch, that not a
 few would probably have been better
 Men, more peaceable and governable,
 less proud, uncharitable, unjust and cruel,
 would have judged more truly of their
 Duty to God, their Neighbour and them-
 selves, had they made no Claim to the
 Title of Christians.

This, it is apparent, may be truly
 affirmed of those *Popish* Christians,
 whose Lives are answerable to the cor-
 rupt Principles which are peculiar to
 that Faction: and if of Multitudes
 that profess to reform from Popery,
 the like were not too reasonably to be
 concluded, the *Church of England*
 would be in much happier Circum-
 stances than now she is.

Thanks be to God, the *Doctrine*,
Discipline, and *Liturgy* of our Church,
 are so far from giving the least En-
 couragement to Licentiousness, and a
 wicked

xxvi DEDICATION

wicked Life, that they are all adapted to the *building us up in our holy Faith*, and the rendering it effectual to the *cleansing us from all Filthiness both of Flesh and Spirit*: and tho' too many of her professed Sons be no Credit to their *Mother*, yet all, who are not grossly prejudiced, must needs acknowledge, that their Vices are a flat Contradiction to their pretended Belief, and that they know no better Men in the World, than are *those* in the Communion of our Church, whose Practice is governed by their Principles.

It is therefore (my Lord) an indisputable Case, that if the Design of Christianity were better considered, we should not hear *Conscience* pleaded, as now a Days it is, for Separation: it being impossible to instance in any one Condition of Communion with our Church, that has the least Shadow of Contradiction thereunto, that is inconsistent with, or in any respect *prejudicial* to that Purity of Heart and
Par-

DEDICATION. xxvii

Participation of the Divine Image, which is necessary to make us meet for the Enjoyment of God. But I am sure, all sober and considerative Persons are abundantly satisfied from their sad Observation that the great Defection that hath been made from our Church, hath proved infinitely pernicious to that Design: and that a lamentable Decay of the *Power of Godliness*, and falling away from that *Righteousness, Purity, Humility, and Charity*, the enduing us wherewith is the Business of our Saviour's Religion, hath been the Product of Separation.

It was therefore, my Lord, the Design of the *former*, and is now of this *second* Publication of this Treatise, to endeavour the Undermining and Subversion of those Principles which have so fatal an Influence, and that tend to make those who embrace them, extremely troublesome to the Church, ill Subjects and ill Neighbours, but most of all injurious to their own

Souls.

xxviii DEDICATION.

Souls. Those Principles being apparently founded in the mistaking, or not duly considering, the great Errand on which our Saviour was sent into the World, and the Scope of the Religion he left behind him.

And, no doubt, there would quickly be observed a blessed Change in the Sentiments and Conversations of Christians, could they once be brought to a true and vigorous Sense of the Design of Christianity. Towards the Increase of which may this mean Endeavour be in any measure serviceable, I could not be persuaded to repent of my Pains, though I were loaded still with more and heavier Censures by deluded and weak People (not to say worse of them) upon the Account of it.

That the divine Goodness would support your Grace under the Burthen of your Age, and deliver you from the Infirmities that are incident there-
unto :

DEDICATION. xxix

unto: that the Church may long be
blessed with your Prudent Govern-
ment, and the Success of your wise
Counsels; and that you may live to
see her present Evils removed, and
Fears prevented, is the unfeigned and
earnest Prayer of,

My Lord,

Your Grace's most Obedient,

and Obliged Servant,

EDWARD FOWLER.

xxviii DEDICATION.

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EDWARD FOWLER.

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blessed with your labours, and
your success, and your life

PREFACE

It is presumed, in the unprinted and

unpublished

HERAS, somewhat above a

Twelve-month since, I published an

Account of the Principles and

Practices of certain moderate Divines,

(abridged called Latitudinarians) together

with a Defence of them, in a free Dispute

between the two intimate Friends Theophi-

lus and Epistaphorus, I have called this

part of the main, and fundamental Reason

of that Dispute; and if the Reader please

to give himself the trouble of turning over

the following Pages, I desire to be

assured that the Doctrine which are chiefly

maintained in that Book naturally result

from, and those which are most opposed in it

are confuted by the Arguments there

presented.

It is thought that in demonstrating the

Establishment of real Righteousness and true

Holiness in the World, to be the ultimate

Design of our Saviour's Coming, and the

grand Business of the Christian Institution,

I have taken upon me to prove a Proposition

that

P R E F A C E.

W H E R E A S, somewhat above a Twelve-month since, I published an Account of the Principles and Practices of certain moderate Divines, (abusively called Latitudinarians) together with a Defence of them, (in a free Discourse between the two intimate Friends Theophilus and Philalethes) I have in this Treatise pursued the main, and fundamental Reason of that Dialogue: and if the Reader pleases to give himself the trouble of running over the following Pages, I hope he will be satisfied that the Doctrines which are chiefly maintained in that Book naturally result from, and those which are most opposed in it are confuted by, the Argument here insisted on.

If 'tis thought that in demonstrating the Establishment of real Righteousness and true Holiness in the World, to be the ultimate Design of our Saviour's Coming, and the grand Business of the Christian Institution, I have taken upon me to prove a Proposition
that

xxxii P R E F A C E.

that is as evidently and indisputably true as any First Principle ; I must say that I most heartily wish there were more thought so than I doubt there are. And I have been so far from giving any one the least Temptation to suspect the contrary, that I have expressly shewn, That there is nothing more clearly apparent than the Truth of it, to such as are not, either through Ignorance or Wilfulness, very strangely blinded ; or that have, with any Seriousness, read the New Testament, or even but a small Part of it.

But though this be so, I may not be accused of so idly employing myself in the first Section, as if I there held up a Torch to shew the Sun, for I have only pointed to it by its own Light ; that is, exposed to View in a few Leaves, the Sum and Substance of that abundant Evidence which throughout the Gospel is given us of that great Truth. And whosoever shall say, that to do this was needless, I shall give him my unfeigned Thanks, would he make me sensible of a Mistake in believing otherwise : and, upon that Account, rejoice to be convinced, that I have spent Time impertinently upon that Argument.

But, alas, it is no less undeniable, that a Discourse of this Nature is necessary and seasonable, than that the Matter of it is true : for it cannot be doubted, that the Design

P R E F A C E. xxxiii

sign of the Christian Religion is by *Abundance of its Professors miserably mistaken; and that (though it is most plainly expressed to be the Reformation of our Lives, and Purification of our Natures, and wholly adapted to that Purpose) the Complaint that Tully took up of certain Philosophers, viz. that they esteemed their Philosophy Ostentationem scientiæ, non Legem Vitæ, a Boast of Science, not a Law of Life, may be applied to not a few of those that are called Christians, concerning their Opinion of Christianity.*

And besides that there are divers Opinions of which too many among us are greatly fond, which make it certain that they have entertained unworthy Notions of the Design of the Gospel, it must be acknowledged that such Practices are likewise observable in the far greater Part, as are a Demonstration that, if they have no false Conception of it, it is but little considered, and therefore not thoroughly believed, by them. And this alone is abundantly sufficient to avouch the Usefulness of my Undertaking both in that and the two other Sections.

And till those who profess themselves Christ's Disciples more generally become effectually sensible (as those of the first Ages were) That the Mystery into which they are

[b]

initiated

xxxiv P R E F A C E.

initiated is purely a Mystery of Godliness, and that it is entirely composed of such Principles as tend thoroughly to instruct Mankind in the Particulars of that Duty to which the Law of their Nature obliges them, towards their Creator, themselves and their Fellow-creatures; together with the most powerful Motives to excite, and the best Means and most successful Assistances to enable them, to a faithful Discharge of them; we may never hope to out-live nor to see the least Abatement of that gross Superstition, Fancifism and Enthusiasm, or those mad Enormities and impious Practices, which have now for a very long Time sullied, and most miserably defaced the Beauty, obscured, nay, and even utterly extinguished, the Glory of the Church of Christ; have laid the Honour, with which she was deservedly once crowned, in the very Dust; and bring the most horrid Scandal upon her holy Profession, and that blessed Name by which she is called.

But not to detain my Reader with a tedious Preface; I shall only observe that he will have no Reason to accuse me, in this Treatise, either of starting, or troubling the World with, Controversies; but he may on the contrary be fully assured, That the right explaining, and well improving the Subject, which is here handled, is the most effectual Course, that can
be

P R E F A C E. XXXV

be taken to put an End not only to those Controversies, with which we are at this Day disturbed, but likewise to the pernicious Effects of all others. What I now write is intended to strike at the grand Cause of them, as they are to be imputed to nothing so much as to the Ignorance of, or Non-attendance to, the Design of Christianity.

I will add no more, but that if this small Performance is as ingenuously and candidly received as it is honestly meant; and if it is believed to proceed not from the Humour of Scribbling, but from a sincere Desire of doing some Service, such a Supposition will be but just to him, who is ambitious of nothing so much as of being instrumental towards the promoting of that most excellent, and infinitely important Design in his own, and in every one's Heart and Life.

Northill, Bedfordshire,
April 17, 1671.

EDWARD FOWLER.

C O N.

C O N T E N T S.

INTRODUCTION. Page 1

S E C T I O N I.

C H A P. I.

The Nature of true Holiness described. Page 4

C H A P. II.

A general Demonstration that the Holiness described is the Design of Christianity by a Climax of seven Particulars. Page 10

C H A P. III.

A particular Demonstration that Holiness is the only Design of the Precepts of the Gospel. And that they require, 1. The most extensive Holiness. 2. The most Intensive. An Objection answered. Page 16

a

C H A P.

C O N T E N T S.

C H A P. IV.

That Holiness is the only Design of the Promises of the Gospel, shewed in two Particulars: And of the Threatenings therein contained. Page 24

C H A P. V.

That the Promoting of Holiness was the Design of our Saviour's whole Life and Conversation among Men; both of his Discourses and Actions. And that he was an eminent Example of all the Parts of Virtue, viz. Of the greatest Freedom, Affability, and Courtesy: The greatest Candour and Ingenuity: The most marvellous Gentleness and Meekness: The deepest Humility: The greatest Contempt of the World: The most perfect Contentment: The most wonderful Charity and tenderest Compassion: Stupendous Patience and Submission to the Divine Will: The most passionate Love of God, and devoutest Temper of Mind towards him: Mighty Confidence and Trust in God.

C O N T E N T S.

God. *An Objection answered: The most admirable Prudence.* Page 31, 32

C H A P. VI.

That to make Men truly virtuous and holy, was the Design of Christ's inimitable Actions, or mighty Works, and Miracles. And that these did not only tend to promote it, as they were convincing Arguments that he came from God, but were also very proper to effect it in a more immediate Manner. Page 58

C H A P. VII.

That to make Men holy was the Design of Christ's Death, proved by several Texts of Scripture: and how it is effectual for that End, discovered in six Particulars. Page 66

C H A P. VIII.

That it is only promoting the Design of making Men holy, which the Apostles aimed at by insisting on the Doctrines of
a 2 *Christ's*

C O N T E N T S.

Christ's Resurrection, Ascension, and coming again to Judgment. Page 78

S E C T I O N II.

C H A P. I.

Two Accounts of the Business of making Men holy: The first, That this is to do the greatest Good to Men: and that the Blessing of making Men holy, is of all other the greatest Good; proved by several Arguments, viz. First, That it contains in it a Deliverance from the worst of Evils; and Sin shewed to be the worst. Page 83

C H A P. II.

The second Argument, viz. That the Blessing of making Men holy is accompanied with all other that are most desirable, and which do best deserve to be so called: particularly with the Pardon of Sin, and
God's

C O N T E N T S.

God's special Love : and that those things of which sensual Persons are most desirous, are eminently to be found in that Blessing.

Page 90

C H A P. III.

The third Argument, viz. That whatsoever other Blessings a Man may be supposed to have who is utterly destitute of Holiness, they cannot stand him in so much Stead, as only to make him not miserable. And all evil and corrupt Affections shewed to be greatly tormenting in their own Nature, and innumerable sad Mischiefs to be the necessary Consequence of yielding Obedience to them.

Page 96

C H A P. IV.

The fourth Argument, viz. That Holiness, when perfected, is Blessedness itself; and the Glory of Heaven consists chiefly in it: This no new Notion : Some Observations on it by the Way.

Page 103

CONTENTS.

CHAP. V.

The second Account of our Saviour's preferring the Business of making Men holy, before any other, viz. That this is to do the best Service to God. An Objection answered against this Discourse of the Design of Christianity. Page 107

SECTION III.

CHAP. I.

The First Inference.

That it appears from the past Discourse, that our Saviour has taken the most effectual Course for the Purpose of subduing Sin in us, and making us Partakers of his Holiness. Where it is particularly shewed, that the Gospel gives Advantages infinitely above any those the Heathens had, who were privileged with extraordinary Helps for the Improvement of themselves. And,

1. That

CONTENTS

1. That the good Principles which were by natural Light dictated to them, and which Reason, rightly improved, persuaded them to entertain as undoubtedly true, or might have done, are farther confirmed by divine Revelation in the Gospel. 2. That of those Principles of which the Heathens, by the highest Improvement of their Reason, could at best conclude but very probable, the Gospel gives us an undoubted Assurance. This shewed in four Instances. 3. Four Doctrines shewed to be delivered in the Gospel, of which no Man, without the Assistance of divine Revelation, could ever once have thought; and these contain wonderful Inducements, and Helps to Holiness: The first of which has five more implied in it. Page 112, 113

CHAP. II.

That the Gospel contains far greater Helps for effecting the Design of making Men inwardly righteous, and truly holy, than God's most peculiar People, the Israelites, were favoured with. Where it is shewed,

1. That the Gospel is incomparably more

C O N T E N T S.

*effectual for this Purpose than the Mo-
saical Law was. 2. And that upon no
other Accounts the Jews were in Circum-
stances for obtaining a thorough Re-
formation of Life, and Purification of
Nature, like to those with which our Sa-
viour has blessed his Disciples. Page 133*

C H A P. III.

*An Objection against the wonderful Efficacy
of the Christian Religion for the Purpose
of making Men holy, taken from the very
little Success it has herein, together with
the prodigious Wickedness of Christendom.
An Answer given to it in three Particu-
lars, viz. 1. That how ill soever its Suc-
cess is, it is evident from the foregoing
Discourse, that it is not to be imputed to
any Weakness, or Inefficacy in that Religion.
The true Causes thereof assigned. 2. That
it is to be expected that those should be the
worse for the Gospel, who will not be bet-
tered by it. 3. That there was a Time
when the Gospel's Success was greatly an-
swerable to what has been said of its Ef-
ficacy: And that the Primitive Christians
were*

C O N T E N T S.

were People of most unblameable and holy Lives. The Gnosticks improperly called Christians in any Sense. The Primitive Christians proved to be Men of excellent Lives, by the Testimonies of Fathers contained in their Apologies for them to their Enemies; and by the Acknowledgments of their Enemies themselves. An Account given in particular of their meek and submissive Temper, out of Tertullian.

Page 141, 142

C H A P. IV.

The Second Inference.

That we understand from what has been said of the Design of Christianity, how fearfully it is abused by those who call themselves the Roman Catholicks. That the Church of Rome has by several of her Doctrines enervated all the Precepts and Motives to Holiness contained in the Gospel. That she has rendered the Means therein prescribed, for the Attainment thereof, extremely ineffectual. That she has also as greatly corrupted them. Divers Instances of the Papists Idolatry.
Their

CONTENTS.

Their Image Worship one Instance. Their praying to Saints departed another. Other Impieties accompanying it, mentioned. Some Account of their Blasphemies, particularly in their Prayers to the Blessed Virgin. Their worshipping the Host the third, and grossest Instance of their Idolatry. Some other of their wicked and most anti-christian Doctrines.

Page 162, 163

CHAP. V.

The Third Inference.

That these two Sorts of Persons are very foolish : 1. Such as expect to have their Share in the Salvation of the Gospel without true Holiness. 2. Such, much more, as encourage themselves by the Grace of the Gospel in Unholiness.

Page 179

CHAP. VI.

The Fourth Inference.

That a right Understanding of the Design of Christianity will give us the true Notion,

CONTENTS

tion, 1. Of Justifying Faith, 2. Of the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness.

Page 186

CHAP. VII.

The Fifth Inference.

That we learn from the Design of Christianity the great Measure and Standard, whereby we are to judge of Doctrines. How we are to judge of the Truth of Doctrines.

Page 191

CHAP. VIII.

How we are to judge of the Necessity of Doctrines, either to be embraced or rejected. A brief Discourse of the Nature of Points Fundamental. How we may know whether we embrace all such, and whether we hold not any destructive and damnable Errors.

Page 197

CHAP.

C O N T E N T S,

C H A P. IX.

The Sixth Inference.

That the Design of Christianity teaches us what Doctrines and Practices we ought, as Christians, to be most zealous for, or against.

Page 200

C H A P. X.

The Seventh Inference.

That the Design of Christianity well considered, will give us great Light into the just Bounds and Extent of Christian Liberty. Of complying with the Customs of our Country, and the Will of our Governors. The great Difference between the Mosaical Law and the Gospel, as to its preceptive Part.

Page 203

C H A P. XI.

The Eighth Inference.

That it is the most unaccountable thing to do that which is essentially Evil, in Defence of

C O N T E N T S.

of the Christian Religion, or of any Opinions presumed to be Doctrines relating to it. The Pope and Church of Rome most highly guilty in this Particular. And not a few of those who profess Enmity against Popery too liable also to the same Charge.

Page 208

C H A P. XII.

The Ninth Inference.

That it is a most unwarrantable thing for the Ministers of Christ to prefer any other Design before that of making Men really righteous and holy. That this ought to be the whole Design of their preaching. That it is of as great Concernment that they promote the same Business by their Conversations, as that they do it by their Doctrine. Infinite Mischiefs occasioned by the loose Lives of Ministers. Several Instances of Practices extremely blame-worthy in Preachers of the Gospel. That they ought to have a Regard to the Weaknesses of Persons so far as lawfully they may. That the promoting of Holiness
ought

CONTENTS.

ought to be the only Design of ecclesiastical Discipline. Page 213

CHAP. XIII.

The Tenth Inference.

That an obedient Temper of Mind is an excellent and necessary Qualification to prepare Men for a firm Belief and right Understanding of the Gospel. That it is so by virtue of Christ's Promise. That it is so in its own Nature. This shewed in three Particulars, viz. in that, 1. It will help us to judge without Prejudice concerning the Doctrines contained in the Gospel. 2. It will give Satisfaction concerning the main Doctrines of Christianity far excelling any that can arise from mere Speculation. 3. It will secure from the Causes of Error in those Points which are of weightiest Importance. Six Causes of such Errors laid down; and an obedient Disposition of Mind shewed to secure from each of them. Page 225, 226

CONTENTS.

CHAP. XIV.

The Last Inference.

That we are taught by the Design of Christianity, wherein the Essence, Power and Life of it consists. Instances in what kind of things it consists not. For what Ends the several Exercises of Piety and Devotion are enjoined. How God is glorified by Men, and by what Means. Whom it is our Duty to esteem, and carry ourselves towards, as true Christians. That by following the Example of Christ, and making his Life our Pattern, we shall assure ourselves that the Design of Christianity is effected in us, and that we are endued with its Power. Page 237

The Conclusion.

Page 249

THE

THE
DESIGN
OF
CHRISTIANITY.

INTRODUCTION.

THE Accusation, which *Celsus* and *Julian*, the grand Adversaries of the Christian Religion, had the impudent Confidence to bring against it; namely, That it indulges Men in, and encourageth them to, the Practice of Immorality and Wickedness, is so notoriously false and groundless, that there is nothing truer, nothing more perspicuously shewn in the Books that contain Christianity, than that the very contrary is the *great Design* of it. But yet notwithstanding, those who will carefully observe the Lives and Actions of an Infinite Number of such as *call Christ their Master*, would be very shrewdly tempted undoubtedly to conclude, that THEY *secretly think*, what those HEATHENS had the Face to *publish*.

And as for even most (I fear I may say) of those Professors of Faith in Christ, who have escaped the *scandalous* and more *gross* Pollutions of the World; that Man who shall take an exact Survey of *their* Conversations also, and consider about

what Matters they *most* busy themselves, what the Designs are which they *chiefly* prosecute, and that not only as *Men*, but as *Christians* too ; what Things they are that exercise *most* of their *Zeal*, and for and against which is spent the *greatest* part of their *Religious Heat* ; will be strongly inclined to suspect, that though they have not entertained so highly dishonourable an opinion of their Saviour, as to esteem him a Patron of Vice, yet they think so undervaluingly of him, as to judge him so mean a Friend to Holiness, as that the promoting it in Mens Hearts and Lives, if it was at all a Design of his coming into the World, and of the Religion he left behind him, yet it was at best but a *Bye-one*, and that some other Matters were *much more* in his View, and *principally* intended by him.

Though I will not say that the greater Part of our most forward Professors have their Heads leavened with such Thoughts, yet any one may dare to affirm that they behave themselves exactly as if they had : And moreover I am absolutely certain, that it is utterly impossible, Men should make such a bustle and stir about Matters of none, or but small Importance, to the serving or prejudicing the real Interest of their Souls ; and, on the other Hand, be as lukewarm, unconcerned, and careless in divers Things that have the most *immediate* and *direct* tendency to their eternal Welfare ; if they *duly* considered, and had a *quick* Sense of what was now intimated, *viz.* *That*

The Design of Christianity.

3

the Business that brought the blessed Jesus by the appointment of God the Father down from Heaven; and the End of his making us the Objects of such rich and transcendant Kindness, was the destroying of Sin in us, the renewing of our depraved Natures, the ennobling our Souls with virtuous Qualities and Divine Dispositions and Tempers, and (in one Word) the making us Partakers of his Holiness. And so long as there are but few that either believe or consider, that this is *The End of Christianity*, and that alone which it *directly* drives at, it cannot be Matter of Wonder, if Multitudes of those which lay a great Claim to it, should be (as excellent a Religion as it is) little the better, nay, and in some Respects, even the *worse* for it.

And on the contrary, it is not to be in the least doubted, That nothing can be so available to the introducing of a better State of Things, the abating and perfectly quenching our intemperate Heats, the regulating and bringing into due Order our wild Exorbitances, the governing and restraining our extravagant and heady Zeal, the enduing us with becoming Tempers, sober Thoughts, and good Spirits, as would the thorough Belief, the due minding and digesting of *this one Principle*.

And for this Reason, I am not able to imagine how Time may be spent to better Purpose, than in endeavouring to possess Mens Minds with it: And to contribute thereunto, what it can, is the

4 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. I.

Business of this Treatise: Whereof these following are the *General Heads*: which shall be insisted on with all possible perspicuity, and convenient brevity, divided into three Sections, viz.

Sect. I. *A plain Demonstration, that True Holiness is the special Design of Christianity.*

Sect. II. *An Account, how it comes to pass that our Saviour hath laid such Strefs upon this, as to prefer it before all other.*

Sect. III. *An Improvement of the whole Discourse in several (and most of them Practical) Inferences.*

S E C T I O N. I.

C H A P. I.

The Nature of true Holiness described.

I N order to the Demonstration hereof, it is necessary to be premised, That the *Holiness* which is the Design of the Religion of *Christ Jesus*, and is by various Forms of Speech expressed in the Gospel (as by *Godliness, Righteousness, Conversion and Turning from Sin, Partaking of a Divine Nature*, with many other) is *such* as is so in the most proper and highest Sense: Not such as is subjected in any Thing *without* us or is made ours by a mere *External Application*, or is only *Partial*: But is originally seated in the Soul
and

Chap. I. *The Design of Christianity.* 5

and Spirit, is a Complication and Combination of all Virtues, and hath an Influence upon the whole Man (as shall hereafter be made to appear) and may be described after this Manner.

It is so sound and healthful a Complexion of Soul, as maintains in Life and Vigour whatsoever is essential to it, and suffers not any Thing unnatural to mix with that which is so; by the Force and Power whereof, a Man is enabled to behave himself as becometh a Creature endued with a Principle of Reason; keeps his supreme Faculty in its Throne, brings into due Subjection all his inferior ones, his sensual Imagination, his brutish Passions and Affections.

It is the Purity of the human Heart, engaging those in whom it resides, to demean themselves suitably to that state in which God hath placed them, and not to act unbecomingly in any Condition, Circumstance, or Relation.

It is a Divine or God-like Nature, causing an hearty Approbation of, and an affectionate Compliance with the eternal Laws of Righteousness; and a Behaviour agreeable to the essential and immutable Differences of Good and Evil.

But to be somewhat more express and distinct, though very brief.

This *Holiness* is so excellent a Principle, or Habit of Soul, as causeth those that are possessed of it (I mean so far as it is vigorous and predominant in them).

First, To perform all good and virtuous Actions, whensoever there is Occasion and Opportunity

6 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. I.
tunity; and ever carefully to abstain from those
that are of a contrary Nature.

Secondly, To do the one, and avoid the other,
from truly *generous* Motives and Principles.

Now, in order to the right Understanding of
this, it is to be observed, That *Actions* may be-
come *Duties* or *Sins* these two Ways.

First, As they are Compliances with, or Trans-
gressions of Divine *positive* Precepts. These are
such Declarations of the Will of God, as re-
strain our Liberty for great and wise Reasons, in
Things that are of an indifferent Nature, and
absolutely considered, neither Good nor Evil:
And so makes Things not good in themselves
(and capable of becoming so, only by Reason of
certain Circumstances) *Duties*; and Things not
evil in themselves, *Sins*. Such were all the In-
junctions and Prohibitions of the *ceremonial* Law;
and some few such we have under the Gospel.

Secondly, Actions are made *Duties* or *Sins*, as
they are agreeable or opposite to the Divine *Mo-
ral* Laws; That is, Those which are of an in-
dispensible and eternal Obligation, which were
first written in Mens Hearts, and originally Dic-
tates of human Nature, or necessary Conclu-
sions and Deductions from them.

By the Way, I take it for granted (and I can-
not imagine how any *considerative*, supposing he
be not a very *debauched* Person, can in the least
doubt it), That there are *first Principles* in *Mo-
rals*, as well as in the *Mathematicks*, *Metaphysicks*,
Etc.

Chap. I. *The Design of Christianity.* 7

&c. I mean such as are self-evident, and therefore not capable of being properly demonstrated; as being no less to be known and easily assented to, than any Proposition which may be brought for the Proof of them.

Now the *Holiness* we are describing is such, as engageth to the Performance of the former Sort of Duties, and Forbearance of the former Sort of Sins, for this Reason *primarily*, because it pleaseth Almighty God to command the one, and forbid the other: Which Reason is founded upon this certain Principle: *That it is most highly becoming all reasonable Creatures to obey God in every Thing; and as much unbecoming them, in any Thing to disobey him.* And secondarily, upon the Account of the Reasons (if they are known) for which God made those Laws. And the Reasons of the *Positive* Laws contained in the Gospel are declared, of which I know not above three that are *purely* so, *viz.* That of going to God by Christ, and the Institutions of *Baptism* and the *Lord's Supper*.

Again, this *Holiness* is such as engageth to the performance of the Duties, and forbearance of the Sins of the *second Kind*; not merely because it is the Divine Pleasure to publish Commands of *those*, and Prohibitions of *these*; but also, and especially, for the *Reasons*, which moved God to make those Publications: namely, because those are good in *themselves*, and infinitely becoming Creatures endued with Understanding and Liberty

8 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. I.

of Will; and *these* are no less evil in *their own Nature*, and unworthy of them.

That Man who would forbear, gratefully to acknowledge his Obligations to God, or to do to his Neighbour as he would that he should do to him, &c. on the one hand; and would not stick at dishonouring his Maker, or abusing his Fellow Creatures in any Kind, &c. on the other; if there were no *written Law* of God for the former, and against the latter; doth not *those Duties*, nor forbears *these Sins*, by Virtue of an Holy Nature that informs and acts him; but is induced thereunto by a mere *animal Principle*, and because it is his *Interest* so to do. And the Reason is clear, because no one that doth thus, only in Regard of the *written Precepts* and Prohibitions of the Divine Majesty, doth so out of respect to them, as *such*, but as they have *Promises*, but especially *Threatenings* annexed to them: For to be sure, he that performs the one, and forbears the other, from any lovely Notion he hath of *Obedience*, and any hateful one he hath conceived of *Disobedience*, will also make Conscience of *those* and the like Duties, in regard of the Goodness, Fitness, and Excellency he discerned in *them*; and will abstain from *these* and the like Sins, because of the intrinsic Evil, Turpitude, and Deformity he apprehends in *them*: For *those* are no whit less manifestly lovely, and worthy of Mankind, than is *Obedience* to the Divine Will, considered in an abstracted Notion; nor *these* less apparently vile,
and

Chap. I. *The Design of Christianity.* 9

and abominable than is *Disobedience*. For that very Reason which makes it an intolerable Thing to disobey a Law of God, (*viz.* because it is highly *unjust* so to do) makes it so also to commit the forementioned, and such like Sins; and so on the contrary. Now this Proposition, *That it is a base Thing to do unjustly*, is one of those which I call *first Principles*; than which there is nothing Mankind more naturally assents to: And those Sins, with many other, are alike plain Instances and Expressions of that shameful Vice *Injustice*, though not of an equal degree of it.

The Sum of what we have said in this Account of the Nature of *True Holiness* is this, *viz.* *That it is such a Disposition and Temper of the inward Man, as powerfully inclines it carefully to regard and attend to, affectionately to embrace and adhere to, to be actuated by, and under the Government of, all those good practical Principles that are made known either by Revelation, Nature, or the Use of Reason.*

Now though nothing is more natural to the Souls of Men, considered in their pure Essentials, and as they came out of their Creator's Hands, than this most excellent Temper; yet by their Apostacy from God, and sinking into brutish Sensuality, they sadly dispossessed themselves of it, and so became like the Beasts which perish. But it pleased the infinite Goodness of Divine Majesty not to give us over so: For when we had destroyed ourselves, in him was our Help found.

He

10 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. I.

He greatly concerned himself for the Recovery of fallen Mankind by various Means and Methods, and when the World was at the very worst, he made Use of the most sovereign and effectual Remedy. *He, who at sundry Times, and in divers Manners, spake in Time past unto the Fathers by the Prophets, did in these last Days send his dearly beloved, and only begotten Son to us.* And to prove that the great Errand he came upon was the effecting of our Deliverance out of that sinful State we had brought ourselves into, and the putting us again into possession of that Holiness which we had lost, is now our next Business.

C H A P. II.

A General Demonstration that the Holiness described is the Design of Christianity by a Climax of Seven Particulars.

IN the first place, in order to the Proof of this, it is worthy our Observation, that St. *John the Baptist* being sent to prepare the way before our Saviour, did so, by teaching the Doctrine of *Repentance*, and baptizing Men thereunto: And that we no sooner read of his appearing in publick, and entering upon his Office of *Harbinger* or *Fore-runner*, but we find him preaching this Doctrine, and making use of the News
of

Chap. II. *The Design of Christianity.* 11

of the *Messiah's* Approach, as a Motive to persuade them to that Duty. *Matth. iii. 1, 2.* In those Days came *John the Baptist* preaching in the *Wilderness of Judea*, and saying; Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. And this was that which the Angel foretold *Zacharias* he should do, when he gave him the first Notice that he should be the Father of such a Son. *Luke i. 16, 17.* And many of the Children of Israel shall be turn to the Lord their God; and he shall go before him in the Power, and Spirit of *Elias*, to turn the Hearts of the Fathers to the Children, and the Disobedient to the Wisdom of the Just; to make ready a People prepared for the Lord: That is, he shall make Way for the *Messiah* with the same Zeal against all Wickedness, as was expressed by *Elias*; and likewise with an immediate Commission from Heaven, as he had, in order to the working of a general Reformation among the *Jews*. This sheweth that Christ's great Errand to us, was our thorough Conversion from Sin, and the making us holy; seeing that the only Preparation necessary for the Entertainment of him, consisted in having this Work begun in us.

Secondly, Upon the first News of Christ's near Approach, brought by *Malachi*, the last of the Prophets, this is expressed by him as that which should be his grand Business when he was come *. *The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his*

* *Malachi iii. 1, 2, 3.*

12 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. I.

Temple, even the Messenger of the Covenant whom ye delight in (or, have a longing Expectation of.) Behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts: But who may abide the Day of his coming? Or, who shall stand when he appeareth? For he is like a Refiner's Fire, and like Fuller's Soap: And he shall sit as a Refiner, and Purifier of Silver; and he shall purify the Sons of Levi, and purge them as Gold is purged, &c.

Thirdly, Immediately after his Conception in the Womb of the blessed Virgin, this was foretold to *Joseph* concerning him by an Angel. *She shall bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call his Name Jesus; for he shall save his People from their Sins* ^b. This Blessing of making Men *holy* was so much the Design of Christ's coming, that he had his very Name from it. Observe, the Words are, *He shall save his People from their Sins*; not from the *Punishment* of them: And (as will fully appear hereafter) that is the *primary* Sense of them, which is most plainly expressed in them: That he shall save his People from the *Punishment of Sin* is a true Sense too, but it is *secondary* and implied only; as this *latter* is the never-failing and necessary Consequent of the *former* Salvation.

This again was foretold by *Zacharias*, betwixt his Conception and Birth. He saith ^c, *That God performed his Covenant in sending Christ*; which Covenant consists in this, *That he would grant us,*

^b Matt. i. 21. ^c Luke i. 72.

Chap. II. *The Design of Christianity.* 13

that we, being delivered out of the Hands of our Enemies, might serve him without Fear, in Holiness and Righteousness before him, all the Days of our Life.

Fourthly, We likewise find this expressed by *Simeon*, immediately upon his Birth, *Luke ii. 32.* Where having called him *God's Salvation*, which he had prepared before the Face of all People, he adds that, *He is a Light to lighten the Gentiles*: whereby is meant, that he should bring them into the Way of Righteousness and true Holiness. *Holiness* is not in a few Places expressed by the Metaphor of *Light*, and *Wickedness* by that of *Darkness*: *Turning from Darkness to Light* is explained by ^d *Turning from the Power of Satan unto God.* And the following Clause, *viz. And the Glory of thy People Israel*, signifieth the same Thing: Namely, that in the Place of their outward and ceremonial Observances, called by the Apostle ^e *Beggarly Elements*, he should bring in among them a far more noble, *viz.* an inward, substantial, and everlasting Righteousness; and by abrogating *that*, and establishing only *this* Righteousness, he should enlarge their Church, an Accession of the Gentiles being by that means made unto it.

Fifthly, This is expressed by *St. John the Baptist*, immediately before our Saviour's solemn Entrance upon the Office, as his Business he was

^d Acts xxvi. 18.

^e Galat. iv. 9.

under-

14 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. I.

undertaking ^f, *I indeed baptize you with Water unto Repentance* (that is, especially from the more plain and confessed Exorbitances) *but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose Shoes I am not worthy to bear; he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with Fire; (which will take away those Stains and Pollutions, that Water cannot :) whose Fan is in his Hand, and he will thoroughly purge his Floor.*

Sixthly, Again, after our Saviour's Entrance upon his Office, he himself declared, that *He came to call Sinners to Repentance*: And that he was so far from coming to destroy the Law and the Prophets, that he came *πληρῶσαι*, to fulfil, or perfect them ^g, that is, by giving more and higher Instances of moral Duties than were before expressly given: And he tells the *Jews* presently after, that *Except their Righteousness shall exceed the Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees* (that is, unless it be above their partial and merely external Righteousness) *they shall in no Case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* And he abundantly made it appear, (as will be quickly shewn) that the Reformation of Mens Lives, and Purification of their Natures, were the great Business that he designed.

^f Matt. iii. 2 and 12. ^g Matt. v. 17. Or *πληρῶσαι* may signify *fully to preach*, as Rom. xv. 19. and Col. i. 25.

Lastly,

Chap. II. *The Design of Christianity.* 15

Lastly, This was frequently asserted, after he forsook the World, by the Apostles he left behind him. St. Peter told his Countrymen ^b, That, as God sent Christ to *blefs* them, so the *Blessing* designed them by him, consisted in *turning them from their Iniquities*. To you first (saith he) God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to *blefs* you, by turning every one of you from his Iniquities. Again, Acts v. 31. the same Apostle, with others, saith that, Him bath God exalted with his Right Hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give Repentance to Israel, and Forgiveness of Sins; Repentance first, and then Forgiveness. St. John tells us ⁱ, that, for this Purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the Works of the Devil ^k. And St. Paul calleth the Gospel of Christ, *The Mystery of Godliness*, 1 Tim. iii. 16. *The Doctrine that is according to Godliness*. And gives us to understand that, that which the Grace of God which brings Salvation teacheth, is, *that denying Ungodliness, and all worldly Lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godlily in this present World* ¹.

^b Acts iii. 26. ⁱ 1 John iii. 8. ^k 1 Tim. vi. 3.
¹ Tit. ii. 12.

C H A P. III.

A particular Demonstration that Holiness is the only Design of the Precepts of the Gospel. And that they require, 1. The most extensive Holiness. 2. The most Intensive. An Objection answered.

BUT to give a more particular Proof of what we have undertaken.

First, It is most apparent, That *Holiness* is the Design, the only Design of the *Christian Precepts*, and that this is the Mark at which they are wholly levelled. What the ^m Apostle spake of the *Jewish*, may be much more said of the *Christian Law*, that *It is holy, just, and good*. For as *Clemens Alexandrinus* in his *Pædagogus* saith, ἐν Χριστῷ νηπιότης τελείωσις ἐστίν, &c. *Even Infant-Christianity is Perfection, compared with the Law or the Mosaical Dispensation.*

There is no *affirmative Precept* in the Gospel, but it either commands *Holiness* in the general, or one or more particular *Virtues*, or *Habits* of *Holiness*, or some essential *Act* or *Acts* of it; or *Means* and *Helps* to the acquiring, maintaining, or increase of it. Such as *bearing* and *reading the Word*, *Prayer*, *Meditation*, *good Conference*,

^m Rom. vii.

Chap. III. *The Design of Christianity.* 17

Watchfulness against Temptations, avoiding Occasions of Evil, &c.

And there is no *negative Precept*, but doth forbid the contrary to some one or more of those Duties; but doth forbid something or other that doth tend either directly or indirectly, immediately or mediately, in its own Nature, or by reason of some Circumstance, to the depraving of Human Nature, and rendering us *perfectly wicked*, or in some Degree or other *less Holy*.

To make this appear by going over the several *Precepts* contained in the Gospel, would be a Work of too much Time; but whosoever, as he reads them, shall duly consider each of them, cannot be to seek for Satisfaction, concerning the Truth of what I have now said; and I dare undertake he will readily acknowledge, That there is nothing which is not upon its own, or some one or other account, greatly becoming us, and perfective of human Nature, in the whole Gospel *commanded*: And that there is not any Thing in itself, and in all Respects innocent, there *forbidden*. This can be by no Means said concerning the *Precepts* of the Law of *Moses*; but that it may concerning those of the Gospel, is absolutely certain.

But my whole Discourse upon this present Argument shall be confined to these two Heads: Namely to shew, *That the Christian Precepts require the most Extensive, and most Intensive Holi-*

18 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. I.

ness; that is, exactly such a Holiness as hath been described.

First, *They require the most extensive Holiness,* Not only towards God, but also towards our Neighbour, and ourselves. In the forecited Place, *Tit. ii. 12.* St. Paul puts all these together, under the Phrases of *living soberly, righteously, and godlily*, as making up that *Holiness* which the *Grace of God*, that brings Salvation, teacheth. The *Precepts* of our Saviour command us not only to give unto God the Things that are God's, but also to Cæsar the Things that are Cæsar's: Not only to obey God in all Things, but to be subject likewise to every Ordinance of Man for the Lord's Sake; that is, to every Ordinance of Man that doth not contradict the Law of God: Not only to fear God, but also to honour the King, and to obey our spiritual Governors, which watch for our Souls, &c. and to behave ourselves towards all Persons suitably to the Relations we stand in to them: *Wives to submit themselves to their own Husbands, as unto the Lord; Husbands to love their Wives even as Christ loved the Church: Children to obey their Parents in the Lord; and Fathers not to provoke their Children to Wrath, but to bring them up in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord: Servants to be obedient to their Masters, with Singleness of Heart as unto Christ, &c. and Masters to do the same Things unto them, forbearing threatening, or a harsh Behaviour towards them, knowing that they have a Master in Heaven,*

Chap. III. *The Design of Christianity.* 19

venⁿ, with whom is no respect to Persons. We are commanded to love not our *Relations*, or our *Friends* only, but also *all Mankind*; and to do good to *all* without Exception, though especially to the *Household of Faith*; to good Men. Nay, our Saviour hath laid a strict Charge upon us, not to exclude our malicious *Enemies* from our *Love* (that is, of *Benevolence*) but to pray for them that despitefully use us, and to bless those that curse us°. Which Law, as harshly as it sounds to carnal Persons, they themselves cannot but acknowledge that what it enjoineth, is heroically and highly virtuous.

Secondly, *The Christian Precepts require the most intensive Holiness*; not only *Negative* but *Positive*, as was now intimated; that is, not only the forbearance of what is evil, but the Performance also of what is good: Not only Holiness of *Actions* and *Words*, but likewise of *Affections* and *Thoughts*: The worship of God with the Spirit, as well as with the outward Man; a holy Frame and Habit of Mind, as well as a holy Life. They forbid cherishing Sin in the *Heart*, as well as practising it in the *Conversation*. They make *lustful after a Woman* Adultery, as well as the *gross Act* of Uncleanness. They make *Malice* Murder, as well as *Killing*; they forbid Coveting no less than Defrauding; and being in love with this World's Goods, as much as getting them by unlawful Means.

ⁿ Eph. vi.

° Matt. v. 44.

20 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. I.

And I shall digress so far as to say, that there is infinite Reason that *Thoughts* and the inward Workings of Mens Souls should be restrained by Laws, upon these two Accounts.

First, Because *Irregular Thoughts* and *Affections* are the immediate Depravers of Mens Natures; and therefore it is as necessary in order to the Design of making Men *holy*, that *these* should be forbidden, as that evil *Actions* and *Words* should. But suppose this were otherwise; yet

Secondly, Laws made against evil *Words* and *Actions* would signify very little, if Men were left at liberty as to their *Thoughts* and *Affections*. It would be to very little purpose to forbid Men to *do* Evil, if they might *think* and *love* it: For where the Sparks of Sin are kept glowing in the *Soul*, how can they be kept from breaking out into a Flame in the *Life*? From the Abundance of the Heart the Mouth will speak, and the Hands act.

But to proceed: *The Precepts* of the Gospel command us not only to perform good Actions, but also to do them after a right Manner, with right Ends, &c. or in one Word, from good Principles. Whatsoever we do, *to do it heartily, as to the Lord and not as to men* ^p. To be *servent in Spirit* in our Service of God ^q. To do all to the *Glory of God* ^r. To be *holy as he that hath called us is holy, in all manner of Conversation* ^s. To be per-

^p Col. iii. 23.

^q Rom. xii. 11.

^r 1 Cor. x. 13.

^s 1 Pet. i. 15.

Chap. III. *The Design of Christianity.* 21

fect as our heavenly Father is perfect^t: Which Precepts shew that we ought to imitate him, not only in the *Matter* of our Actions, but likewise in the *Qualifications* of them: Among which, that which I said is essential to true Holiness, is a principal one; namely, to do good Actions for those Reasons which moved God to enjoin them, and, I add, which make it pleasing to him to perform them himself, viz. because they are either in themselves and upon their own account, excellent, worthy, and most fit to be done, or are made so to be by some Circumstance.

Our whole Duty to God and our Neighbour (as our Saviour hath told us) is comprehended in the *Love* of them: And the *Love of God* required by him is a most *intense* Love: We are commanded to love him *with all the Heart and Soul, Mind and Strength*^u; and *that* of our Neighbour which he hath made our Duty, is such, as for the *Kind* of it, is like the Love which we bear to ourselves; such as will not permit us to wrong him in his *good Name*, any more than in his *Estate* or *Person*^w; such as will not allow us *rashly* to *speak*, or so much as *think* ill of him; such as will cause us to put the best Constructions on those Actions of his that are capable of various Interpretations^x, &c. And for the *Degree*, such as will make us willing to lay down our very *Lives* for him, that is, for the promoting of his eternal Happiness^y.

^t Matt. v. 48. ^u xix. 19. ^w Tit. iii. ^x 1 Cor. xiii. 5. ^y 1 John iii. 16.

22 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. I.

To sum up all together, We are commanded to add to our Faith Virtue, to Virtue Knowledge, to Knowledge Temperance, to Temperance Patience, to Patience Godliness, to Godliness brotherly Kindness, and to brotherly Kindness Charity ². To behave our selves in all Respects towards our Creator as becometh his Creatures, and those which are under unspeakable Obligations to him: Towards one another, as becometh those that are endued with the same common Nature, and according to the different Relations, Engagements, and other Circumstances we stand in each to other: and towards ourselves according as the Dignity of our Nature requires we should. In short, *whatsoever Things are true, whatsoever Things are honest, whatsoever Things are just, whatsoever Things are pure, whatsoever Things are lovely, whatsoever Things are of good Report, whatsoever Things have Virtue and Praise in them* ², are the Objects of the Christian Precepts, and by them recommended to us. Let any one read but our Saviour's incomparable Sermon upon the Mount, the twelfth to the *Romans*, and the third Chapter of the Epistle to the *Colossians*, and well consider them, and it will be strange should he find it difficult to assent to the Truth of that Proposition.

Even *Trypho* himself, in the Dialogue betwixt *Justin Martyr* and him, confessed, that the Precepts contained in the Book called the Gospel are *δασυπράδα καὶ μὲγαλα*, *Great and Admirable*. He saith

² 2 Pet. i. 5, 6, 7. ^a Phil. iv. 8.

indeed

Chap. III. *The Design of Christianity.* 23

indeed, that they are so admirable, as that he suspected them not to be by human Nature observable; but in that he spake not unlike to himself, that is, a prejudiced and carnal Jew.

If it be now objected, that notwithstanding what hath been said concerning the *Christian Precepts* recommending the most elevated Virtue to be practised by us, it is acknowledged by all sober Christians, that they are not to be understood in so high a Sense as to require of us indefective and unspotted Holiness, or at least that our Saviour will accept of and reward that Holiness which is far short of *Perfect*; and therefore he can be no such great Friend to it, as hath been affirmed: The Answer is very easy and obvious, viz. That our Saviour's not rigidly exacting such a Degree of Holiness as amounts to *Perfection*, proceeds from hence, that the Attainment of it is in this State impossible to us; and therefore it is not to be attributed to his Liking or Allowance of the least Sin, but to his special Grace and Good-will to fallen Mankind: Nay, moreover, it proceeds from his passionate Desire that we may be as pure and holy, as our unhappy Circumstances will admit; he well knowing, that should he declare that nothing short of *Perfection* shall be accepted at our hands, he would make us desperate, and take the most effectual Course to cause us to give over all thoughts of becoming better, nay, and to let the Reins loose unto all Ungodliness. But yet nothing short of *Sincerity*, and *diligent, serious En-*

24 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. I.
deavours to abstain from all Sin, will be admitted by him in order to our being made the Objects of his Grace and Favour: And as for wilful and presumptuous Sins of what kind soever, he makes no Allowances for them, but hath by himself and his Ministers declared very frequently, that they shall not be pardoned, without our Reformation. And, Lastly, notwithstanding the Allowances and Abatements that in tender Compassion to us he is pleased to make us, no less than our absolutely perfect Holiness is designed by him, though not to be effected in this, yet in the other World.

C H A P. IV.

That Holiness is the only Design of the Promises of the Gospel, shewed in two Particulars: And of the Threatenings therein contained.

SEcondly, The *Promises* and *Threatenings* of the Gospel have most apparently the promoting of *Holiness* for their only Design.

First, The *Promises*, it is plain, have. This St. Peter assureth us, 2 *Epist. Chap. i. Ver. 4. Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious Promises, that by these you might be Partakers of the Divine Nature, having escaped the Corruption that is in the World through Lust.* And St. Paul doth more than intimate the same, in 2 *Cor. vii.*

Chap. IV. *The Design of Christianity.* 25

1. *Having (saith he) these Promises, dearly Beloved, (viz. those which the foregoing Chapter concludes with) let us cleanse ourselves from all Filthiness of the Flesh and Spirit, perfecting Holiness in the Fear of God.* Again, *Rom. xii. 1. I beseech you, by the Mercies of God, that ye present your Bodies a living Sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable Service. And be ye not conformed to this present World, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your Minds, &c.*

1. We always find these *Promises* either limited to *holy* Persons, or made Use of as Encouragements and exciting Motives to *Holiness*. The Apostle tells us, that it is *Godliness* which hath the *Promises of the Life that now is, and of that which is to come* ^a. The Promise of the beatifical Vision is made to *the pure in Heart. Blessed are the pure in Heart, for they shall see God* ^b. That of the Kingdom of Heaven to the *poor in Spirit* ^c, or those that are of humble and lowly Tempers. The Promise of obtaining Mercy to *the Merciful* ^d. That of inheriting the Earth (of temporal Felicity) to the *Meek* ^e, or such as live in Obedience to Government, &c. That of eternal Life to those that *patiently continue in Well-doing* ^f. That of sitting with Christ on his Throne, to those that *overcome* ^g, that is, that mortify their Lusts and corrupt Affections. The Promise of a Crown of

^a 1 Tim. iv. ^b Matt. v. 8. ^c Verse 3. ^d Verse 7.
^e Verse 5. ^f Rom. ii. 7. ^g Rev. iii. 21.

26 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. I.

Life is used as a Motive to persuade to *Faithfulness to Death*^h. But to what Purpose do I multiply Instances, when as there is not a particular *Promise* throughout the whole Gospel, but it is expressed, or plainly intimated, that its Performance depends upon some Duty of *Holiness* to be on our Parts first performed, or at least heartily endeavoured. And whereas the Promises of Pardon, and of eternal Life are very frequently made to *believing*, there is nothing more evidently declared than that this *Faith* is such as purifieth the Heart, and is productive of good Works.

2. Nay, the *Nature of these Promises* is such, as is of itself sufficient to satisfy us, *That Holiness is the Design of them.*

1. This is manifestly true concerning the *principal Promises*, or those which relate to the other Life. They may be reduced to these three Heads; *That of the Holy Spirit; of Remission of Sin; and of eternal Happiness in the Enjoyment of God.*

Now for the first of these, *viz. The Promise of the Spirit*, that is it to which we are beholden for Grace and Assistance in the great Work of subduing Sin, and acquiring the Habit of Holiness; and this is the very Business for the sake of which that Promise is made to us.

And for the second and third, they are such as none but holy Souls are capable of. That none but such are capable of having the *Guilt* of their

^h Rev. ii. 10.

Chap. IV. *The Design of Christianity.* 27

Sins removed, and of being freed from the Displeasure and Wrath of God, is self-evident; for the *Guilt of Sin* must needs remain while its *Power* continues; these two are inseparable from each other: Sin is so loathsome and filthy a thing (as shall hereafter be shewn) that it is perfectly impossible that the Blood of Christ itself should render a Sinner lovely, or not odious, in the Sight of God, any otherwise than by washing away the Pollution of it. And nothing is more apparent, than that holy Souls alone are in a Capacity of the Happiness that consists in the Enjoyment of God in the other World; than that, as without Holiness no Man shall see the Lord, (as saith the Author to the *Hebrews*) so without it none can see him: For the full and complete Participation of God, which our Saviour promiseth his Disciples and faithful Followers, ariseth out of the Likeness and Conformity of Mens Souls to him: But there is such a perfect Unlikeness and Contrariety in impure and polluted Souls to the infinitely holy God, that it is impossible there should be any Communications from him to them, any friendly Agreement and Complacency between him and them. *He is not a God that hath Pleasure in Wickedness, neither can Evil dwell with him*, Psal. v. 4. *What Communion hath Light with Darkness?* saith the Apostle, 2 Cor. vi. 14. But vicious and unholy Souls are full of Darkness, whereas God is pure splendid Light, and in him is no Darkness at all. The *Platonists* would not admit that any Man is capable

28 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. I.

capable of being acquainted with *divine* Things, that is not purged from that which they called *ῥαθυμία*, and *ἀλογία*, *Remissness of Mind and Brutish Passions*. How utterly impossible then is it, that such as are not so, should be acquainted with Divinity itself? Hierocles saith, ὡς οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ λημῶνι, &c. *As a Bleer-eye cannot look upon σφόδρα φωτεινά*, *Things very bright and shining, so a Soul unpossessed of Virtue is unable to behold the Beauty of Truth*: How unable then is such a Soul to behold the Beauty of God himself, to see him as he is, and be happy in the Sight of him? Those Eyes which have continually beheld Vanity (as saith an excellent late Writer ⁱ of our own) would be dazled, not delighted, with the beatifick Vision. *Thanks be to God* (saith the Apostle) *who hath made us meet to be Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light* ^k. Those can by no means partake of it, that are not by Holiness made meet and disposed for it. What Happiness can we find in the Enjoyment of God, when he is of a perfectly contrary Nature to our own? And moreover, How can we then enjoy him? There must be in us a Likeness to him, or *we cannot see him as he is*; for St. *John* proves, that *when he appeareth, we shall be like him*, by this Argument.

ⁱ See The Causes of the Decay of Christian Piety; or an Impartial Survey of the Ruins of the Christian Religion, undermined by unchristian Practice.—This Book was wrote by the Author of the Whole Duty of Man, and well deserves repeated Perusals.

^k Col. i. 12.

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Chap. IV. *The Design of Christianity.* 29

It was one of the Maxims of the excellent *Socrates*¹, *It is unlawful for an impure Nature to touch pure Divinity.* Now this being the *Happiness* promised in the Gospel, we easily learn from the Consideration of the *Nature* of it (it being not at all gross and sensual, but purely spiritual) what is the *Design* of those *Promises* that contain it. At the first hearing of them, though they should sound (as they do not) like *absolute* ones, we may be certain that Holiness, and sincere Endeavours after a Participation of a Divine Nature, must necessarily be tacit Conditions of them, as without which our Souls cannot possibly be qualified and put into an apt Disposition for them.

2. As the *Promises* which concern the *other Life* are such as none but *holy* Souls are capable of; so those that only relate to *this Life* are such as none but such Souls will be *contented* with. They are only *Necessaries* which the Gospel gives us an Assurance of, and such Things as may be a Help to the Exercise of *Virtue* and *Holiness*; not *Superfluities*, and such as serve to gratify liquorish Appetites. So we are to understand that of our Saviour, *Matt. vi. 3. First seek the Kingdom of God, and his Righteousness; and all these Things shall be added unto you:* The Words foregoing shew, that by [*all these Things*] we are only to understand *Meat, Drink, and Cloaths.* The temporal Blessings that Christ engageth himself to

¹ Μὴ καθαρῶ καθαρῶ ἰσχυρίζεσθαι μὴ ἔδεμνόν τῃ.

30 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. I.

bestow upon his Disciples, are such alone as tend to answer *moderate* Desires, not to satisfy *inordinate* Cravings; in short, they are only such as are needful to keep their Bodies in such a State as that they may be meet Habitations and Instruments of their Souls, so long as it shall be fit for them to continue in them.

Secondly, And as for the *Threatenings* of the Gospel, which are most terrible and dismal, that they have the same Design that the *Promises* have, is out of Question; for they are never used to scare Men from any thing but what tends to pollute and debauch their Souls: And the End of them is every where to excite us effectually to Diligence and Industry in the Pursuit of real Righteousness and substantial Holiness.

*The Wrath of God is revealed from Heaven in the Gospel against all Ungodliness, and Unrighteousness of Men*¹; such as disbelieving and disobeying Christ's Gospel, in the general; and particularly, such as *Idolatry, Adultery, Fornication and Uncleaness* of all Sorts; *Theft, Covetousness, Drunkenness, Reviling, Wrath, contemptuous Behaviour, Implacability, Unmercifulness, Illiberality, Malice, Censoriousness, Lying, Pride, Hypocrisy, Rebellion, and Disobedience to Governors*^m, &c. And there-

^m Rom. i. 18. ⁿ 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. Matt. v. 22.
 Chap. xi. 16. Chap. xviii. 28. Chap. xxv. 42.
 1 John iii. 15. Matt. vii. 1. Revel. xxi. 27.
 Jam. iv. 6. Matt. xxiii. 13. Rom. xiii. 1, 2.

Chap. V. *The Design of Christianity.* 31
fore are the Committers of these and such like
Sins threatened, that so those, which, from the
Consideration of their vile Nature and Ugliness,
will not be withdrawn from them, may from a
Principle of Self-preservation, be afraid of them:
And our Saviour is infinitely good to us in his
terrifying *Threatenings*, as well as in his alluring
Promises. For (as *Clem. Alex.* in his *Pædagogus*,
saith) *His Threatenings proceed not from Anger, but*
from great Good-will; and he therefore threatneth
Punishment, that Sinners being thereby scared into
Reformation, may by that means prevent their being
punished. He doth not (as he proceeds) like a Ser-
pent, bite before he giveth warning. And there-
fore only doth he give warning, that he may
not bite.

C H A P. V.

That the Promoting of Holiness was the
Design of our Saviour's whole Life and
Conversation among Men; both of his
Discourses and Actions. And that he
was an eminent Example of all the Parts
of Virtue, viz. Of the greatest Freedom,
Affability, and Courtesy: The greatest
Candour and Ingenuity: The most mar-
vellous

32 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. I.
vellow Gentleness and Meekness: *The deepest Humility: The greatest Contempt of the World: The most perfect Contentment: The most wonderful Charity and tenderest Compassion: Stupendous Patience and Submission to the Divine Will: The most passionate Love of God, and devoutest Temper of Mind towards him: Mighty Confidence and Trust in God. An Objection answered: The most admirable Prudence.*

THirdly, The Promoting of Holiness was the Design of our Saviour's *whole Life and Conversation among Men.* All his Discourses that are on Record carried on this great Business: Not only his *Sermons*, but likewise those which were less solemn, and that *occasionally*, and as it were *by the Bye* dropt from him. There is not a *Parable* he uttered, but something highly conducing to the instilling of Virtue into those to whom he directed it, was the *Moral* of it: And all Advantages and Occasions he embraced for the infusing of true Piety and Holiness into the Souls of Men.

To give a few Instances: When it was told him that his Mother and Brethren sought for him, he took that Opportunity to tell them, that *who-soever will do the Will of God, the same is his Brother, Sister, and Mother, Mark iii. 35.* When he

he observed a Reasoning among the Disciples, which of them should be the greatest in the Kingdom of God, he took Occasion from thence to preach to them the Necessity of the Grace of *Humility*, and *becoming as little Children*, of *Self-denial*, *Mortification of their most beloved Lusts*, and to teach them several other very excellent Lessons, *Matt. xviii.* in the Beginning. Upon a certain Woman's saying to him, *Blessed is the Womb that bare thee, and the Paps that gave thee suck*, he minded his Hearers of the Blessedness of *obedient Persons*; yea rather (said he) *are they blessed that bear the Word of God, and keep it*, *Luke xi. 28.* Upon *Martha's* desiring him to command her Sister to help her in serving, he reprov'd her for being over-solicitous about the Affairs of this Life, and put her in Mind of the *one Thing needful*, *Luke x. 41.* From a Pharisee's marvelling that he washed not before Dinner, he took an Advantage to reprove their Superstition, Hypocrisies, partial Righteousness, Pride, and several other Immoralities, *Luke xi. 38, &c.* From a Person's desiring him to speak to his Brother to divide the Inheritance with him, he took an Opportunity to discourse against *Covetousness*, and to dissuade from setting the Heart upon earthly Riches, from Solitude and anxious Carefulness, and to exhort to several most weighty and important Duties, *Luke xii. 15, &c.* Upon some Mens talking of the lamentable Disaster that besel the *Galileans*, he took Occasion to give a Caution against rash

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Judging,

Judging, and to preach to them the absolute Necessity of *Repentance*, as that without which they should all perish. Upon his observing how that at a Feast they chose the uppermost Rooms, he laid hold of that Opportunity to teach the Virtue of *Humility*, *Luke* xiv. 7. And in the same Chapter he took the Advantage that was offered him by other Passages, for the Instilling of divers other profitable Instructions. And you may find in the four Evangelists Abundance of Observations of this Nature.

And as it was the Business of all his *Discourses* to teach Virtue, so was it also of all his *Actions*: He preached *Holiness* to Mens *Eyes* no less than to their *Ears*, by giving them the most admirable Example in his own Person, of all the Parts of it. His whole Life was one continued Lecture of the most excellent *Morals*, the most sublime and exact Virtue.

For Instance; he was a Person of the greatest *Freedom*, *Affability*, and *Courtesy*; there was nothing in his Conversation that was at all austere, crabbed, or unpleasant. Though he was always *serious*, yet he was never sour, sullenly grave, morose, or cynical; but of a marvellously conversable, sociable, and benign Temper. Those who had Checks from his Disciples, as rude and troublesome, were never accused by him for being so, but were most kindly listened to, and lovingly received; even *little Children*, as unwelcome as they were to them, were tenderly embraced, and
blessed

Chap. V. *The Design of Christianity.* 35

blest by him. He never blamed any for interrupting him in his Discourses, or other Business; but ever patiently heard them, and sent none of them from him (supposing they had no ill Design in coming to him) without Satisfaction. When he was invited to Mens Tables (as little as their Entertainments could tempt him) he readily went; nor did he esteem it as unbecoming his Gravity to appear at a Marriage-feast, or to contribute to it *himself*. He did not think that he was *defiled* by bad Company, nor did he baulk the Society of Publicans and Sinners themselves, (as loathsome as they were to *worse* Men, the *Pharisees*) but freely, in order to the Reforming of them, sat down, when there was Occasion, and conversed with them. His first Entertainment of the Woman of *Canaan*, as uncivil as it might seem, was far from being so; for the unkind and contemptuous Language he gave her, though it was but the same which the *Jews* always bestowed upon those People, proceeded from no *Contempt* of her; nor was it designed, as the Event shewed, in the least to discourage her, but on the contrary, to give her Occasion to shew the *Greatness* of her *Faith*, in the Answer she returned to it. The too often infirm, imprudent, and impertinent Talk of his Disciples, and others, could not at any time put him out of his good Temper, but only gave him an Opportunity of imparting to them seasonable Instructions, and wise Counsels.

The *Candour* also, and *Ingenuity* of his Spirit,

36 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. I.

to great Admiration discovered itself; of which take this one Instance: Whereas he (as was said) forbad censorious Judging of other Men, and consequently commanded to put the best Constructions upon those Actions of others that are capable of various Interpretations, he hath given us no small Encouragement so to do, by his Behaviour towards those three Disciples, whom he could not persuade for a little while to forbear sleeping, no not in his *Agony*, great as the Obligations were, which he had lain upon them, to do any thing he should please to desire. Their *sleeping* at such a Time seemed a certain Sign that they were very much unconcerned for their blessed Lord, and had great Coolness of Affection to him; especially as he had before desired them to *watch* with him, and given them the Reason *why* he did so: Yet for all this would he impute it to no worse a Cause than mere Infirmary, nor entertain any ill Opinion of them upon *that* Account; and when they themselves had nothing to say to excuse their Fault, he makes this Apology himself for them; *The Spirit indeed is willing, but the Flesh is weak*: Nay, though for all this, and notwithstanding that friendly Expostulation of his with *Peter*, *Couldst thou not watch with me one Hour?* they fell asleep again, yet did he not at his last Return to them, pass any Censure upon them, but behaved as he was used to do.

And the *Gentleness* and *Meekness* of his Disposition was very marvellous: When *James* and
John

Chap. V. *The Design of Christianity.* 37

John in a great Heat would have persuaded him to call for Fire from Heaven, after the Example of *Elias*, to consume the *Samaritans* for their inhospitable and barbarous Refusal to entertain him, he rebuked them immediately for that revengeful Notion, and replied, *Ye know not what Manner of Spirit ye are of; for the Son of Man is not come to destroy Mens Lives, but to save them,* *Luke ix. 55.* and silently went his Ways. Never had any one such strong Provocations to Wrath and Revenge, as the blessed *Jesus*; but never were either so undiscernible in any as they were in him. In his Carriage, indeed, towards the *Pharisees*, he might seem to be once or twice transported with a Fit of unordinary Passion, but it would not have become the Zeal he had for God, and true Goodness, to behave himself otherwise towards such shockingly immoral Wretches, and most hatefully conceited, and proud Hypocrites. Nor was his over-turning the Tables of the Money-changers, or whipping the Buyers and Sellers out of the Temple, any other than a very becoming and proper Expression of his just Displeasure against those sacrilegious, and prophane People. But he was never so concerned for himself, for his own Reputation, or ought else that belonged to him, as to be moved to the least Heat by all the ignominious Language, which was from time to time given him; and the vile Reproaches and unsufferable Abuses which were heaped upon him. When he was accosted with a never-to-be-paral-

38 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. I.

leled Impudence by his old Disciple *Judas*, in the Front of an armed Multitude, who could have forborne to receive such a villainous and intolerably base Traitor, with the most emphatical Expressions of an exasperated and enraged Mind? But with what wonderful *Mildness* was that Monster of Ingratitude and Dissimulation treated by our dear Lord! The worst Words he bestowed upon him being these, *Judas, betrayest thou the Son of Man with a Kiss?* Nor did he speak more angrily to the wicked Followers than he did to their Leader, when they rudely assaulted and apprehended him. And he was far from revenging himself, though he was able to do it effectually; and though (as he told them) he could, if he pleased, have no less than twelve Legions of Angels employed in his Service. Nay more, he wrought a Miracle to heal the Wound which one of them received from the Sword of *Peter*, and charged him to put up his Weapon.

Nor was it ever in the Power either of the calumniating and blasphemous Tongues, or rude and cruel Hands of his bitterest Enemies, to draw from him so much as a reviling or fierce Word. But of so rarely moderate a Temper and serene Spirit was he, that (as *St. Peter* saith) *When he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.* He gave his Back to

Chap. V. *The Design of Christianity.* 39

the Smiters, and his Cheeks to them that plucked off the Hair; he hid not his Face from Shame and Spitting P. He was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his Mouth; he is brought as a Lamb to the Slaughter, and as a Sheep before her Shearers is dumb, so he opened not his Mouth 9. And thus hath he taught us by his own most excellent Example, to obey those *Precepts*, by which the Practice of *Meekness*, and Sedateness of Spirit towards injurious Persons, is enjoined on us.

Nor was his *Meekness* less to be paralleled or more observable than his great *Humility*; from whence indeed *That* proceeded; and was no small Expression of *This*. Especially considering his high Descent, most transcendent Perfections, and infinite Worth, it was impossible he should have been so *meek* as to put up such contemptuous Usage, and inexpressibly-provoking Affronts as he did, if his *Humility* had not been equal to his other Excellencies; if he had not been most lowly-minded, and of a profoundly-submissive Spirit. God only had the Glory of all his mighty Works, he would not ascribe even the least to *himself*. *The Father*, saith he, *that dwelleth in me, he doth the Works*, John xiv. 10. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: For, whatsoever Things he doth, these doth the Son likewise*, John v. 19. *I can of mine own self do nothing; as I hear, I judge; and my*

P Isa. 1. 6.

9 Isa. liii. 7.

40 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. I.
Judgment is just, because I seek not mine own Will,
but the Will of the Father which hath sent me,
Verse 30.—*I do nothing of myself; but as my*
Father hath taught me, I speak these Things,
John viii. 28.

Though he was *King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, the Prince of the Kings of the Earth*, yet did he hide his Greatness, told his Disciples that *his Kingdom is not of this World*, and chose the Condition of a Subject, and a private Man: Nor would he be persuaded to assume so much Authority to himself, as judging between two Persons in a Case of Civil Right. In the above-cited Place (*Luke xii. 15.*) when one desired him to speak to his Brother, that he might divide the Inheritance with him, he returned him this Answer, *Man, who made me a Judge or a Divider over you?* Nay, he put himself into the Condition not only of a private, but also of a mean, a most despicably mean Person: For he condescended to be born of a mean Woman, in the meanest and even vilest of Places, a Stable; where a Manger was his Cradle, and brute Beasts his Chamber-fellows; so in like Manner he afterwards subjected himself to his poor Mother, and the Carpenter her Husband. He was not unacquainted, even when he was a Child, with the Nobility of his Descent, or the Greatness of his Extraction: He even then well understood whose Son he was; and that no less a Person was his Father, than the infinite God of Heaven and Earth; for, said he to *Joseph and Mary,*

Chap. V. *The Design of Christianity.* 41

Mary, when, after a sorrowful Search after him, they found him in the Temple, *Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's Business?* Yet notwithstanding, he went down with them from Jerusalem, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them, *Luke ii. 49, 51.* And under *Joseph*, though he knew him to be but his reputed Father (if we may believe *Justin Martyr*) he wrought at his own Trade, and, as he saith, *τεκτονικὰ ἔργα ἔργαζέτο*, did Carpentry-work; and particularly busied himself in making *ἀροτῆς καὶ ζυγὰ*, *Ploughs and Yokes.*

Again, the Persons that he took for his most intimate Associates were of no better Quality than Fishermen, and Men of the lowest Rank. As for his worldly Estate, he had none: *The Foxes*, said he, *have Holes, and the Birds of the Air have Nests, but the Son of Man hath not where he may lay his Head.* And as for Employments, he did not think himself above even the most servile, viz. *the washing of his Disciples Feet.* In short, so marvellously humble was this infinitely great Person, that (as he says) *He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister* *; and was in this World as one that serveth *; and that, though he was rich, he became poor, that we through his Poverty might be rich †; that, though he was in the Form of God, he thought it no Robbery (or Spoil) to be equal with God; but made himself of no Reputation, and took upon him the Form of a Servant, and was made in the Likeness of

* *Matt. xx. 28.* † *Luke xxii. 27.* † *2 Cor. viii. 9.*

42 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. I.

Men; and being found in fashion as a Man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Cross ^u. And our Saviour has declared that he was our Pattern both in his *Meekness and Humility; learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in Heart* ^w; and therefore he submitted to that meanest Office of a *Servant* (which has just been mentioned) that we might, from the Consideration of *his Example*, not look upon the lowest, by which we may serve our Brethren, as below us: for, after he had washed his Disciples Feet, and was sat down again, he said thus to them, *Know ye what I have done unto you? Ye call me Master and Lord, and ye say well, for so I am: If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your Feet, ye also ought to wash one another's Feet: For I have given you an Example, that ye should do as I have done unto you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, the Servant is not greater than his Lord, neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these Things, happy are ye if ye do them* ^x.

Considering what hath been said of his chusing so mean and despicable a Condition in this World, I need not spend time in shewing what an Example he hath given us of *Contempt of it*. Never was any one so dead to its Pleasures as he was; nor were ever its Glories so trampled on as by our Saviour; and that, not as were the Carpets of *Plato* by that Cynick *Diogenes*, who was told

^u Phil. ii. 6; 7. ^w Matt. xi. 29. ^x John xiii. 12.

(and,

Chap. V. *The Design of Christianity.* 43

(and, indeed, with great Truth) by that eminent Philosopher, *that he trod under Foot the Pride of Plato with a greater Pride*, for he was guilty of no insolent Behaviour either towards great Men or their Greatness, nor of any thing that looked in the least like it; but he gave most eminent Demonstrations of the mean Opinion he had of Popularity and Applause among Men, of Titles of Honour, and vast Revenues, and that he infinitely despised them all, in comparison of mental Endowments and Accomplishments. He confuted the idle Fancies of the World concerning these, and the like Things; and disparaged those vain Estimations that are founded upon them, by making it his Choice to be wholly without them; whereby he likewise signified how little Evil he apprehended in Disesteem, Reproach, and Poverty; of which *we*, vain Creatures! have such frightful Conceptions, and so great a Dread: He did not at all matter them, nor in the least concern himself at them.—His Soul was so great and generous, as to be so far from suffering his Mind to be at all disquieted with them, that he voluntarily and freely chose them; for it lay in his Power to be the *richest* Man under Heaven, and most to abound with this World's Goods, if it had so pleased him; and he could, if he had listed, have been also the most *popular* Person upon Earth; could always have kept the Credit, which for a while he had among the common People, and gained the like among all Sorts: He had infinitely

44 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. I.
 finitely the Advantage above all that ever appeared
 in the World, to have raised to himself a most
 mighty Renown, and to be adored by all People :
 So that the Truth of that Saying of *Epietetus*,
They are not the Things themselves which so af-
fright and scare Men, but the false Opinions they
have conceived of them ^y, is greatly confirmed as
 to the forementioned reputed Evils, by our Sa-
 viour's Practice.

And this blessed Person, *chusing* so mean and
 contemptibly-poor a Condition of Life, I need
 not tell you that he was perfectly *contented* with
 it; and altogether free (though he had many
 times scarcely from Hand to Mouth) from
 Thoughtfulness and Anxiety of Mind, concern-
 ing his future Maintenance. As he cautioned his
 Disciples against *taking Thought for their Life, what*
they should eat, what they should drink, and where-
with they should be cloathed; and shewed the Folly
 and Sinfulness of it, as proceeding from Distrust-
 fulness of the Divine Providence, (*Matt. vi. 25,*
&c.) so was he far from being guilty of that
 Fault himself, being no less *liberal* than *poor*.
 When he was provided with a small Pittance of
 Food, instead of saving it, he did not think much
 of giving it to others whose Needs required it :
 We read twice of his bestowing the little Stock
 that he and his Disciples had gotten between them,

^y Ταράττει τὸς ἀνθρώπους ἢ τὰ πράγματα ἀλλὰ τὰ περὶ αὐτῶν
 δόγματα.

Chap. V. *The Design of Christianity.* 45

upon the hungry Multitude, and of his working a Miracle to make it hold out among them.

And how full he was of *Charity*, and *tender Compassion*, is beyond Expression; for as he commended to his Disciples, and inculcated upon them nothing more, nor scarcely so much, as this Virtue, he was himself remarkably exemplary in the Exercise of it. We often read of the yearning of his Bowels towards miserable Mortals; and his Pity always exerted itself in Acts of Mercy. Never did any make Application to him for Deliverance from the Evils that afflicted them, who had not their Requests granted: Nor were any more forward to beg Relief of any kind from him, than he was to bestow it: Nay, he frequently made poor Creatures the Objects of his Mercy, even before they desired it. It was, indeed, his whole Business to oblige the World by signal Kindnesses, and (as shall be farther shewn) he continually went up and down doing good either to the Bodies, or Souls of Men: Nay, his Charity was of so large and universal an Extent, that the Wicked, the Unthankful, and even his bitterest Enemies, were, as well as others, very ample Partakers of it. Whereas the Duty of *blessing those that curse us*, and *praying for those that despitefully use us*, is, to our corrupt Natures, one of the hardest, and most difficult of any he hath imposed upon us; he hath taken a Course by the admirable Example he hath herein given us, to make it one of the easiest, and most pleasant to us.

For

46 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. I.

For the devilish Malice that by the vilest of Men was expressed towards him, could not in the least embitter his Spirit, or harden his Heart against them: Nor could he be dissuaded by it from persisting in doing good to them; but continued to entreat them to accept of Life from him, to grieve at their Infidelity, and with Tears to bewail their most obstinate Perverseness. And, lastly, when their inveterate and implacable Hatred came to vent itself in the cruellest and most barbarous Manner imaginable upon him, he prayed to his Father for them; even whilst they were tormenting him, he beseeched him to forgive them; nay, laid down his *very Life* for the Remission of *their Sins*; even for their's, I say, that crucified him.

And this gives Occasion to discourse something of his most wonderful *Patience*, and Submission to the Will of God, of which he gave us in his extreme Sufferings, an Example. We are exhorted, *Heb. xii. 1, 2. to run with Patience the Race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our Faith; who for the Joy that was set before him, endured the Cross, despising the Shame, &c.* The Ignominy which was cast upon him by ungodly Creatures, he despised; and as for the excessive Tortures he felt, *them* he *endured*: He did not indeed *despise* these also, but yet he *fainted* not under them; which we are forbidden to do, *My Son, despise not thou the Chastisement of the Lord, neither faint when thou art rebuked of him.* There were, on the one hand, no
stoical

Chap. V. *The Design of Christianity.* 47

stoical Rants heard from him, such as that of *Possidonius* in the Presence of *Pompey* (when he was afflicted with a Fit of the Gout, or some such Disease) viz. *Nihil agis dolor, &c.* O Pain, thou art an insignificant Thing, I don't matter thee; for we find that our Saviour had as quick a Sense of Pain as other Men have; and his Agony in the Garden so affected his Soul, as to force, *ῥοπαλῶν αἱμάτων*, Clodders of Blood through the Pores of his Body. We read that he was *fore amazed*, and *very heavy*; and he told his Disciples that *his Soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto Death*: Yet, on the other hand, notwithstanding the immense Weight, and most heavy Pressure of Grief his Mind suffered under, through his Father's withholding the wonted Influences of his Love from him, and the intolerable Torments of *Body* that he underwent, (though, both in regard of the Greatness of his Sufferings, and also his most perfect Innocence, and therefore Non-desert of them, he might have the greatest Temptations imaginable to be *impatient*) he never uttered a murmuring or discontented Word; nor conceived the least Displeasure at the Divine Majesty; or doubted either of his *Justice* or *Goodness*; but entirely submitted himself to this his severe Dispensation of Providence, and willingly acquiesced in it. He prayed, indeed, to his Father, that this bitter Cup, if it were possible, might pass from him; but it was on this Condition, that it might seem good to him. And as so much is implied in those Words,

48 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. I.

Words, *If it be possible*, so is it expressed, *Luke* xxii. 42. where it is said, *Father, if thou be willing, remove this Cup from me*; and it immediately followeth, *nevertheless, not my Will, but thine be done*; as he has in the absolute Form he left us, required us likewise to pray. And again, saith he, *John* xviii. 11. *The Cup which my Father giveth me, shall I not drink it?* and *John* xii. 28. After he had put up the forementioned Petition, to be delivered from that most dismal Hour that was approaching near him, he, as it were, recalls it presently, in these Words, *But for this Cause came I unto this Hour*; and then puts up this second, *Father, glorify thy Name*; which is plainly as much as if he had said, *Father, as dreadful and terrifying as the Thoughts are of my future Sufferings, seeing Glory will redound to thyself by them, I am not only contented, but also desirous to undergo them.*

Celsus having mentioned that celebrated Bravado of *Anaxarchus* to the Tyrant of *Cyprus*, when he cruelly pounded him in his Mortar; and the merry Saying of *Epictetus* to his Master when he broke his Leg, and thereupon scoffingly demanded of the Christians, what Saying like to either of those, was uttered by their God in the midst of his Sufferings, *Origen* makes this good Reply to him, *viz.* That our Saviour's Silence in the midst of the Tortures he endured, shewed greater Patience and Fortitude of Mind, than all the Sayings of the *Greek Philosophers* in the like Cases:

Chap. V. *The Design of Christianity.* 49

Cases: And he adds, that those Words of Christ, *Not as I will, but as thou wilt*, were not only *φωνὴ ἰσθδωνότου*, *ἡγακουμένη διὰ τοῖς συγκαίνουσιν*, &c. *the Voice of one that patiently suffered, but also of one who was well pleased with his Sufferings*, and spake his Preference of what was appointed for him by the Divine Providence, before his own Desires and natural Affections.

In the next Place, our Saviour gave us the most eminent and noble Example of *Love to God*, and the devoutest Temper of Mind towards him. Of that Love to him, *with all the Heart and Soul, Mind and Strength*, which he commended to us as our Duty, he himself gave the highest Demonstrations. His last mentioned *Patience*, and perfect Submission to the Divine Pleasure, under the most dreadful Sufferings, is *alone* sufficient to convince us that his *Love* to his Father was most *intense*; for it was utterly impossible that *his Will* should be so entirely resigned up to *the Will of God*, if his *Love* of him had not been *sincere*, of the *highest* Degree, and absolutely perfect. He was willing to endure the extremest Misery that ever was inflicted on any Mortal, provided his heavenly Father might be glorified by it. And, indeed, his mere well interpreting so severe a Providence, was a strong Expression of no small Love. And besides, it was (as he told his Disciples) his very *Meat to do the Will of him that sent him, and to finish his Work* ^z. As he was heartily well pleased

^z John iv.

50 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. I.

to suffer his Will, so he took infinite *Content*, *Satisfaction*, and *Delight* in *doing* it. It was to him the most pleasant thing in the whole World to be about his Father's Business; and therein he *abounded*, and was indefatigable. All he did was referred by him to the Honour of God; and of each of his *glorious Works* he gave him the *Glory*, and *him* only: which was no less an Argument of the *Ardency* of his *Love*, than (as we have said it is) of the *Depth* of his *Humility*. In all his Ways he acknowledged God, and took every Occasion to mention him, and to speak of his excellent Perfections. When the Ruler called him but *good Master*, which was an Epithet, had he been but a mere Man, he was infinitely worthy of; as slight an Occasion as this may seem to some, it minded him to speak of *God's Goodness*; and he presently replied, *Why callest thou me good? there is none good* (that is, originally and from himself) *but God only*. He was much in delightful Converse with God, and in Prayer to him, and frequently retired from all Company for that Purpose, as he hath enjoined us to do, *Matt. vi. 5, 6*. And we read *Luke vi. 12*. of his continuing on a Mountain alone a whole Night in Prayer.

A mighty *Confidence* and *Trust in God*, as it could not but be an Effect of our Saviour's no less *Love* of him, so did he give marvellous Instances of it. The Storm that put his Disciples into a dreadful Consternation, could not terrify, nor so much as discompose him; no, though he was suddenly

Chap. V. *The Design of Christianity.* 51

denly awaked out of a sound Sleep by their dismal Cries. When he was lifted up into the Air by his grand Adversary, the Devil, and set upon a Pinnacle of the Temple, and then by perverting Scripture, solicited to cast himself down; as much as he seemed to be abandoned to his Power, and under as great a Disadvantage as he was through extreme fasting, his *Mind* was as *strong* as his *Body* was *weak*; his Constancy remained unshaken; his Thoughts undisturbed; and with an undaunted Courage he readily replied to him, *It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God*, Matt. iv. 5. where you have also two other signal Instances of the like Nature. By all which he shewed that his *Trust in God* was so invincibly strong, and his *Adherence* to him so inseparably close, that the utmost Attempts, and fiercest Assaults of the Devil, could have no other Effect than to prove them so. Our Saviour could never be prevailed upon to go the least *Step* out of God's Way, in order to his Preservation from the most imminent Dangers, so firm was his *Faith* in him: And he continued doing the Things that were pleasing in God's Sight; he was undoubtedly assured of the Continuance of God's Presence with him. This he hath himself told us, *John* viii. 29. *And he that hath sent me is with me; the Father hath not left me alone, for I do always those Things that please him.*

So visible and apparent was his *Trust in God*, that when he was given up to the most barbarous

52 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. I.

Rage of his Adversaries, they themselves could not but take notice of it, and scoffingly when he hung on the Cross, and therefore seemed to be in a desperate Condition, they upbraided him with it: *He trusted in God, let him deliver him now if he will have him, for he said, I am the Son of God,* Matt. xxvii. 43. And whereas it hath been objected by some of our Saviour's Adversaries, that a little before his Death he expressed very great Distrust, if not perfect Despair of his Father's Love, in that tragical Exclamation, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* there are those that conceive it may be satisfactorily enough answered, that it is most unreasonable and ungenerous to take Advantage from Words uttered in the very *Pangs* of Death; accompanied too with insupportable Misery; since it is not commonly supposed that any can be *themselves*, who are in *such* Circumstances; and why the *Man* Jesus, or our Saviour, according to his *human Nature*, should not be under as great Disadvantages as others in such a Condition, (for he was not less sensible of Pain than other Men) no Reason can be assigned: Yet we stand not, however, in any Necessity of this Reply. But, I say, secondly, Though we should suppose our Saviour to be now as perfectly Master of his Thoughts as he ever was, these Words may not be understood in so harsh a Sense, for they were but a Repetition of the first Verse of the twenty-second *Psalms*; which relates not to *David's* Case only, but also to the *Messiah*, whom
he

he often personated, and was a Type of. The ancient *Jews* themselves so understood this Psalm. Nor can it be gathered from our Saviour's Rehearsal of these Words, that he either concluded, or at all doubted, that he was utterly rejected and cast off by his Father, but the contrary; for several Verses in the forementioned *Psalm* assure us, that they are not *there* to be so understood; because *David* again and again afterward, not only prays for, but likewise expresses good *Hopes*, nay, and *undoubted Assurance* of a gracious Deliverance; and praises God for it too, as if it were already effected: This sad Complaint, therefore, of the blessed *Jesus*, as it could not be occasioned by the least *Distrust*, may be more than presumed to have proceeded from the highest and intensest Degree of *Love*, which caused in his Soul the most pungent and smart Sense of his Father's hiding his Face, and absenting himself (though but for a while) from him. But the least favourable Interpretation it is capable of, is no worse than this, *viz.* That our Saviour did thereby express how excessive the Misery was which he then felt; especially since the Word *Lama* signifies *how*, as well as *why*. But farther, his dying Words, and the last he uttered, express his retaining a *Confidence in God* (how much soever he might seem to be cast off by him) to the very last; which were these, *Father, into thine Hands I commend my Spirit.*

54 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. I.

I will instance in one Virtue more wherein our Saviour was also singularly exemplary. Whereas he advised his Disciples to be *wise as Serpents*, and *innocent as Doves*, they beheld in his Conversation a Pattern to walk by in following the former, as well as the latter Part of this Advice : Nor was the *Wisdom of the Serpent* less conspicuous in him, than was the *Innocence of the Dove*. *Prudence* is the first of the primitive Virtues, or of those from whence all other have their Original. She is the chief Governess of human Actions ; and those which are performed without her Direction, want a main Circumstance, which is necessary to give them the Denomination of truly virtuous. A rash and heady Doing of those Actions, which are for the *Matter* of them praise-worthy, will render them culpable as to the *Manner* of their Performance : And he, who has no regard to *Prudence*, though he may do good Things, and possibly may sometimes *mean* well, yet he will never merit the Commendation of a Well-doer. I say, therefore, that our blessed Saviour, as he has by his *Example*, no less than by his *Doctrine*, taught us the Exercise of all other Virtues, so has he of this also ; and his Prudence wonderfully discovered itself through his whole Life. Very great as was his Zeal for the *Glory of God*, and the *Good of Men*, it was not too strong for his *Reason* ; it was not a *blind Zeal* ; but he was ever very careful to give each of his Actions their due Circumstances. As eagerly as he was bent upon accomplishing the
Work

Chap. V. *The Design of Christianity.* 55

Work for which he was sent into the World, he was not for making more Haste than good Speed. He shewed great *Prudence* in his Injunctions, his Preaching, and Discourses : He never urged any Duties *unseasonably*, and always took care not to give such severe Precepts to his new Disciples as might discourage and overburden them. He was not for putting a Piece of new Cloth into an old Garment, or new Wine into old Bottles ^a.

He very wisely *timed* his Discourses; not preaching all his Doctrines at once : What was said of the Orator *Demosthenes*, cannot be truly affirmed of him, *viz. That he knew what to say well enough, but not what not to say*; for, as he well understood what Doctrines to preach, so also what *not* to preach. *He spake the Word unto them as they were able to hear it*, Mark iv. 33. And, said he, *John xvi. 12. I have yet many Things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.* He knew both when to speak, and when to hold his peace; and in whatsoever he said, he considered the *Genius, Temper,* and *Capacity* of his Auditors. He would *not cast Pearls before Swine*, as he cautioned his Disciples not to do; for this Reason, *lest they turn again and rend them* ^b. When he thought good to deliver those Doctrines that were likely to exasperate, as that of the Calling of the Gentiles, and Rejection of the Jews, &c. he chose to fold them up in Parables, unfolding them in private to his

^a See Matt. ix. 14, to 17.

^b Matt. vii.

56 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. I.

Disciples, who were fitly disposed for the receiving them; and therefore had the Favour bestowed upon them *to understand the Mysteries of the Kingdom*, as he told them.

We find that till he knew his time of suffering was come, he wisely still avoided Danger (wherein he properly shewed the Wisdom of the Serpent) one while by withdrawing himself, as *Matt. xii. 14.* and at other times by concealing those Doctrines, which he was well aware the unbelieving *Jews* would be so far from embracing, and making good use of, that they would take Occasion from them the more industriously to design his Ruin: We read *John x. 33, to 36.* That he would not expressly own himself to be the Son of God in any other Sense, than such a one as he might acknowledge with the least Danger; and concealed that which he very certainly knew would but confirm them in their Opinion of him as a wicked Blasphemer, and make him so much the more obnoxious to their Spite and Rage. So far was he from running headlong upon Sufferings, and making himself, through a rash and indiscreet Zeal, liable to those that hated him; so far was he from being in Love with *Persecution*, that he did (as the Apostle exhorted the *Ephesian* Christians to do) *ἐξαγοράζειν τὸν καιρὸν*, *buy out, or gain time, because the Days were evil*, and full of Danger.

Again, how wisely did our Saviour from time to time, *defeat and render unsuccessful*, the Plots
and

Chap. V. *The Design of Christianity.* 57

and Machinations of the *Pharisees*, and his other Enemies, against him ! We find in *Matt.* xxii. 15. the *Herodians* (or those of the *Jews* that adhered to the *Roman* Authority) and the *Pharisees* (who esteemed it as an Usurpation) combining together to intangle him in his Talk : And they so ordered their Plot, that they might get an Advantage from whatsoever he should say, either to render him obnoxious to *Herod* and the *Roman* Party, or to enrage the most popular and highly esteemed Sect of the *Jews*, the *Pharisees*. In order to accomplish this, they cunningly put this Question to him, viz. *Whether it were lawful to pay Tribute to Cæsar ?* If he should answer that it was, he would make himself liable to the latter Mischief ; if, that it was not, to the former, and the far greater. Now (as is to be seen in the 19th, 20th, and 21st Verses) our Saviour with such admirable *Prudence* contrived his Answer, that (Verse 22.) both Factions are said to wonder at it, and to be baffled by it : *When they had heard these Words, they marvelled, and left him, and went their Way.* Divers other Instances there are of a like Nature ; as in *John* viii. 3, to 9. *Matt.* xxi. 23, to 27. *Matt.* xxi. 41, to 46, &c.

And thus we have sufficiently and fully enough proved, that it was the whole Business of our Saviour's Life to make Men, in all Respects, *virtuous* and *holy* ; and that to this End were subservient not only his *Discourses* with them, but his *Actions* likewise, and whole Behaviour. *Plus docent exempla*

58 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. I.
empla quàm præcepta : Examples are the most natural and easy Way of teaching ; and they are so by reason that Mankind is so greatly addicted to Imitation ; and, I say, from our past Discourse it sufficiently appears, That our Saviour's whole Conversation, was a rare Exemplification of all kinds of Virtue, and true Goodness.

C H A P. VI.

That to make Men truly virtuous and holy ; was the Design of Christ's inimitable Actions, or mighty Works, and Miracles. And that these did not only tend to promote it, as they were convincing Arguments that he came from God, but were also very proper to effect it in a more immediate Manner.

BUT it cannot be amiss, if we moreover add, That it was not only the Design of our Saviour's *imitable* Actions, to teach the World Virtue, but also of those which are *not imitable*, viz. of his *Miracles* and *mighty Works* : and that *these* not only tended to promote that Design, as they were convincing and infallible Arguments that he came from God, but were likewise very proper
to

Chap. VI. *The Design of Christianity.* 59
to effect it in a more *immediate* Way. For they
were not only *argumentative*, or a Proof of the
Truth of his *Doctrine*, but also *instructive*, and
reminded Men of their *Duty*. Those Miracles
which he chose to work, were of such a Nature,
as to be peculiarly fit to accomplish at one, and
the same time, both these Businesses: They were
not such as the foolish and carnal *Jews* expected,
that is, *Signs from Heaven*, that were apt to pro-
duce *directly* no other Effect than that of pleasing
their childish Fancies, or striking their Senses
with Admiration and Astonishment, by making
prodigious and amazing Shews and Representa-
tions before their Eyes; but most of them were
Expressions of the greatest *Kindness* and *Charity* to
Mankind. For Instance, his healing the Sick of
all Manner of Diseases; his making the *Lame* to
walk, and the *Blind* to see, and the *Deaf* to hear;
his cleansing the *Lepers*, feeding the *Hungry*,
raising the *Dead*, and ejecting evil Spirits out of
those that were miserably possessed with, and tor-
mented by them, &c. In *Acts* x. 38, the Apostle
expresses our Saviour's working *Miracles* by
this Phrase, *doing good*, who (saith he) *went up*
and down doing good, and healing all that were op-
pressed of the Devil. And in his *Miracles* he gave
Instances of great Kindness and Good-will, even
to those which least deserved it; for he used his
Divine Power for the Healing and Relief of the
disengenuous, and *unthankful*, *ill-natured*, and
wicked, as well as of the *better-disposed*, and more
2 worthy

worthy Persons ; therein imitating his heavenly Father (as he required us to do) *who maketh his Sun to rise on the Evil and on the Good, and sendeth Rain on the Just and on the Unjust*, Matt. v. 45. And the last *Miracle* of which we read before his Crucifixion, was the Curing one of those very Enemies, who came with Clubs and Staves to apprehend him.

And the few Miracles besides those that consisted in doing *Kindnesses* to Men (for what we have on Record are almost *all* of that Sort) were such as by which he gave us an Example of other Virtues ; as particularly of *Piety, Trust in God, and Zeal for him*. Of his *Piety* and *Trust in God*, his fasting forty Days and forty Nights, was a great Evidence: It was so of his *Trust* in him, and constant adhering to him, as by thus doing he put himself, by his Father's Appointment, upon most violent and strong Temptations ; in conflicting with which he came off a most noble Conqueror. Of his *Zeal* for God, was his whipping the Buyers and Sellers out of the Temple a great Instance ; as it was also of his most gracious Respect to the contemned *Gentiles*, out of whose Court they were whipped ; they making *their House of Prayer a Den of Thieves*, as our Saviour told them. And this may deservedly be numbered among his Miracles, because it is inconceivable how a Man unarmed, in no Authority, and of mean Esteem in regard of his Parentage, Poverty, and low Circumstances, should strike such

Chap. VI. *The Design of Christianity.* 61

a Fear into those People, as to force them, without the least Offer of Resistance, to flee before him, if the Cause of it were not extraordinary, and more than natural.

And even that Miracle which might seem the most inconsiderable, namely, his causing his Disciple *Peter* to catch a Fish with a small Piece of Money in its Mouth, was also instructive of a Duty; it being an Instance of his *Loyalty* to the supreme Magistrate; for the Money was expended in paying Tribute, and taken out of the Sea in that strange Manner for no other Purpose.

In short, I know no one Miracle that our Saviour wrought, but, over and above its being a Seal for the Confirmation of his Divine Mission, it teaches some one or other good Lesson, and is proper for the bettering of the Souls of those who seriously consider it.

And that great Miracle, which after his Ascension (according to his Promise) he shewed in sending the Holy Ghost, promoted the Business of making Men *holy*, in a far higher Way than that of Example; for the grand and standing Office of the Spirit in the World, is the exciting in us *holy Desires*, and the assisting of us in the Performance of *holy Actions*: It is making the Gospel, and all Means, effectual to the Renovation and Reformation of our Hearts and Lives.

If it be objected, that we read of two Miracles, namely, his cursing the Fig-tree, and sending the Devils into the Herd of Swine, which are so far from

62 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. I.

from containing any Lessons of *Morality*, or tending to the least good, that they seem to be on the contrary only of an evil and mischievous Consequence.

I answer, That as for our Saviour's cursing the *Fig-tree*, which bare *Leaves*, and had no *Fruit* on it, it was a most significant Document to Men, that their Profession, which is answerable to bearing *Leaves*, must be joined with a suitable Practice, and have *Fruit* accompanying, or 'twill be nothing worth: And *fruitless* Persons were taught by that Emblem, for what they must look, if they continued so. But the most pregnant Meaning of it is (as the learned Doctor *Hammond*^c hath shewn) that the *Jews*, which were just like that leafy Tree, without Fruit at that time on it, a mere professing People, were to expect speedy Destruction from him, on Supposition that they persisted in their Unfruitfulness. It is not once to be imagined that this, which our Saviour did to the *Fig-tree* was any other than *emblematical*; for no one that deserveth the name of a Man, would be guilty of such a piece of foolish Revenge, as to wreak his Anger on a *senseless Tree*, or on any thing that's incapable of being faulty. And besides it is mentioned in the Story as related by St. *Mark*, xi. 13. that *the Time of Figs was not yet*, or, it was not then a Season for Figs; that is, it was not a good Fig-year; which is

^c See *Hammond's* Comment on the New Testament.
given

Chap. VI. *The Design of Christianity.* 63

given as the Cause of the Tree's being at that time without Fruit: and 'tis very probable, *that* Clause was purposely added, that it might be more easily observed, that our Saviour's Curse was not designed to be determinated in the Tree, but that it was pronounced against it, only as it was an apt Resemblance of a Professor who is *barren* of good Works. So that this Miracle was designed no less than the forementioned, to be *instructive* to the Spectators of it, and to all that should afterwards hear, or read the Story concerning it.

And as for that other, *viz.* his sending the Devils, which he had ejected out of a poor Man, into a Herd of Swine, and by that Means causing them to run violently down a steep Hill into the Sea, and to perish there: We read, First, that our Saviour did not *command* them, but only *suffered* them (as 'tis expressed both by St. *Mark* ^d, and St. *Luke* ^e) at their own Request to take Possession of those Beasts. Nor does the saying to them, *go*, (which is in St. *Matthew's* Relation of the Story) speak any more than a bare Permission, seeing their beseeching him to suffer them to go ^f, is there expressed as the Occasion of his so speaking. The Mischief, therefore, which was done, the *Devils* only were the Authors or the proper Causes of. Nor, Secondly, could our Saviour *permit* this, either to make *Sport*, or to *please* him-

^d Mark v. 13.

^e Luke viii. 32.

^f Matt. viii. 31, 32.

64 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. I.
self with the *Destruction* of the *poor Creatures*; for both these were infinitely below him, and perfectly contrary to the *Seriousness* of his *Spirit*, and *Goodness* of his *Nature*; but there were very weighty, and great Reasons why he should thus do.

As, First, to expose the hateful Nature of the Devils, and to give Men to understand and take notice, how extremely they delight in doing Mischief; which it greatly concerns the Welfare of our Souls not to be ignorant of, and well to consider. By this Experiment it appeared, that those unclean Spirits are so maliciously disposed, and so bent upon Mischief, as that rather than want Objects to vent their Spite on, they would be glad to do it upon brute Beasts. But especially the Devil's most inveterate, and deadly Hatred to *Mankind*, was hereby shewed; when they were no longer permitted to do them a greater, they were glad of an Opportunity to make them the Objects of a less Mischief; and to procure to them what Hurt they were able in their *Goods*, when they ceased to be in a Capacity of tormenting them either in their *Minds*, or *Bodies*.

Secondly, By this Means there was a Discovery made what a *Multitude* there were of them that possessed that *one*, or at most (according to St. *Matthew*) *two* Persons; insomuch as that those which were cast out of them, were enough to actuate the Bodies of a Herd of Swine, consisting of no fewer than about two thousand, as St. *Mark* says; and none could tell (but he that cast them
out

out of the Men, and suffered them to enter the Swine) how very many each of these might be possessed with. This was of great Importance to be known, in order to the understanding the Greatness of the Miracle that was wrought in Behalf of the miserable Wretches; and to their being made sensible how mighty a Deliverance Christ had given them. For though the Devils declared that their Name was *Legion*, to signify that they were a huge Multitude; yet what they said was too incredible to be received upon the bare Word of those who had been Liars from the Beginning; but this Permission of our Saviour gave a plain Demonstration, that in *this Saying* of theirs they were *not Liars*.

Thirdly, These Persons were by this Means most effectually taught how infinitely they were obliged to the Divine Providence, in not suffering this vast Number of Fiends, all the time they had Possession of them, to destroy them; when as they no sooner entered into the Herd of Swine, but immediately they dispatched them all.

Fourthly, This Permission was also a just Punishment to the *Gadarens*, to whom those Beasts belonged, who (as afterward it appeared) were a Generation of Muck-worms, who preferred their *Swine* before their *Souls*; and so likewise it was a most proper and effectual Means for the Conversion of them. Several other Reasons of this Action might be instanced in, but these, nay any one of them, may well suffice. So that it is ap-

parent that this Miracle was so far from being a *mischievous* one, or of no Use, that there was scarcely any one wrought by our Saviour, more pregnant with profitable Instructions.

C H A P. VII.

That to make Men holy was the Design of Christ's Death, proved by several Texts of Scripture: And how it is effectual for that End, discovered in six Particulars.

FOurthly, The making of us holy, as it was the Business of our Saviour's whole *Life*, so was it also the great End and Design of his *Death*. And this we are assured of by abundance of express Scriptures; some few of which we will here produce; *Rom. vi. 6. Knowing this, that our old Man is crucified with him, that the Body of Sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve Sin.*

2 Corinthians v. 15.—*He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him that died for them, and rose again.*

Galatians i. 4. *Who gave himself for our Sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil World,*
(viz.

Chap. VII. *The Design of Christianity.* 67

(viz. from its corrupt Practices) according to the Will of God and our Father.

Ephesians v. 25, 26, 27. *Husbands love your Wives, as Christ loved the Church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of Water by the Word, that he might present it unto himself a glorious Church, not having Spot or Wrinkle, or any such Thing; but that it should be holy and without Blemish.*

Colossians i. 21, 22. *And you that were sometimes alienated, and Enemies in your Minds by wicked Works, hath he now reconciled in the Body of his Flesh through Death, to present you holy and unblameable, and unreprouable in his Sight.*

Titus ii. 14. *Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all Iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar People, zealous of good Works.*

1 Pet. i. 18. *For as much as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible Things, as Silver and Gold, from your vain Conversation received by Tradition from your Fathers; but with the precious Blood of Christ, as a Lamb without Blemish, and without Spot.*

1 Pet. iii. 18. *For Christ also hath once suffered for Sins, the Just for the Unjust, that he might bring us to God, &c. That is, says Calvin upon the Place, that we might be so consecrated to God as to live and die to him.*

1 Pet. ii. 24. *Who his own self bare our Sins in his own Body on the Tree, that we being dead to*
F 2 *Sins,*

68 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. I.
Sins, should live to Righteousness, by whose Stripes ye were healed.

Now the *Death* of Christ is greatly effectual to this End of making us *holy*, these several Ways.

First, As it gave Testimony to the Truth of his Doctrine; which (as has been shewn) has no other Design. Christ took his Death upon it that *that* was true; was willing to expose himself in the Defence of it, to a most ignominious and painful Death.

Secondly, As the shedding of his Blood was a federal Right, confirming the New Covenant, wherein is promised in, and through him the Pardon of our Sins, and eternal Happiness, on Condition of our sincere Repentance, Faith, and new Obedience: So the Blood of Christ is called the *Blood of the Covenant*, Heb. x. 29.

And the *Blood of the everlasting Covenant*, Heb. xiii. 20.

Thirdly, As it is exemplary of the highest Virtue, 1 Pet. ii. 21. *Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an Example, that we should follow his Steps; who did no Sin, neither was Guile found in his Mouth; who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.* The greatest Humility and Self-denial, the greatest Meekness, Patience, and Submission to the Divine Will, the most wonderful Charity, and Forgiveness of Enemies, &c. are exemplified in our Saviour's Death; and so it must needs be very highly effectual towards

Chap. VII. *The Design of Christianity.* 69

wards the promoting of these most excellent Graces, and the like, in us; and the expelling and utterly extirpating the contrary Vices.

One would think it impossible that he should be of an haughty Spirit and a *proud* Mind, that seriously considers how the only-begotten Son of God humbled himself to Death, even the shameful and ignominious Death of the Cross: That he should *covet* great Things in the World, who frequently affects his Mind with the Thoughts of his Saviour's emptying himself, and becoming poor, that we through his Poverty might be made rich, and preferring the Death of the *vilest* of Wretches before the Life of the greatest, and most *honourable*. How can he be vain, who considers his Saviour's horrid Agony, what a Man of Sorrows he was, and how acquainted with Grievs? How can he storm at the receiving of Injuries, and swell with Indignation against those who offer him Incivilities, and rudely behave themselves towards him, fixes his Thoughts upon his Saviour's *Meekness* in putting up the vilest, and most contemptuous Usages, and considers how gentle, sedate, and Lamb-like he was, when barbarous Villains mocked, buffeted, and spit upon him; crowned him with Thorns; put a Robe in a Jeer upon his Back; and a Reed for a Scepter into his Hand; and at last acted the Parts of the most inhuman Butchers towards him. One would think it no uneasy Matter to persuade ourselves to forgive very heartily the spitefullest, and most ma-

70 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. I.

licious Enemies; whilst we take notice that Christ shed even his precious Blood for those who carried in their Breasts the greatest Malignity against him, and bare him the most deadly Hatred; that he suffered *Death* for those who, in the cruellest Manner they were able, took away his *Life*. What Temptation can be forcible enough to prevail upon us *Sinners*, to murmur, and repine at the Hand of God in the Afflictions he lays upon us, while we observe how much *greater* Sufferings than ours, were endured with profoundest *Submission* to, and also the heartiest Approbation of the *Divine Will*, by the not only perfectly *innocent*, but also the *infinitely well-deserving* Jesus?

Fourthly, As the Death of Christ was likewise a *Sacrifice for Sin*, it was in an eminent Manner effectual to this great Purpose. In the Death of Christ, considered as an *expiatory* and *propitiatory Sacrifice*, is the Offence that God Almighty hath taken against Sin, and the Hatred he bears to it, as well as his Love to us Sinners, abundantly declared; insomuch that he would not forgive it to us, without the Intervention of no meaner an Offering than the Blood of his only-begotten Son. Observe what the Apostle St. Paul saith to this Purpose, *Rom. iii. 25, 26. Whom God hath set forth to be a Propitiation through Faith in his Blood, to declare his Righteousness for the Remission of Sins that are past, through the Forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time, his Righteousness, that he might be just, and the Justifier of him which believeth*

Chap. VII. *The Design of Christianity.* 71

lieth in Jesus. The plain Sense of which Word (as I conceive) is this: That God might at one and the same time demonstrate how *holy* he is, and how much he *hates Sin* on the one hand, and how infinitely *gracious* he is in his Willingness to *forgive Sinners* on the other, was Christ set forth by him to be a Propitiation through Faith in his Blood. There are many (and they no Adversaries to the Doctrine of our Saviour's Satisfaction) who do not question but that God *could* have pardoned Sin without any other Satisfaction than the Repentance of the Sinner, (and in the Number of them were *Calvin, P. Martyr, Musculus, and Zanchy,* as might be fully shewn out of their several Works,) but he chose to have his Son die for it, before he would admit any Terms of Reconciliation, that so he might perform the highest Act of *Grace*, in such a Way, as at the same time shewed also the greatest *Displeasure* against *Sin*. And therefore would he thus do, that so he might the more effectually prevent wicked Mens encouraging themselves by the Consideration of his great Mercy, to persist in their *Wickedness*. Therefore was Christ set forth to be a propitiatory Sacrifice for Sin, I will not say that his Father (who is perfectly *sui Juris*) might be put by this Means into a Capacity of forgiving it, but that it might be a cogent Motive, and a most prevailing Argument for Sinners to forsake their Sins.

72 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. I.

There is an excellent Place to this Purpose, *Rom. xviii. 3. For what the Law could not do, in that it was weak, through the Flesh; God sending his own Son in the Likeness of sinful Flesh, and for Sin (or by the Means of Sin) condemned Sin in the Flesh; that is, what the Precepts of the Mosaical Law could not do, in that they were weak by reason of the Impetuosity of Mens fleshly Inclinations, that the Son of God (coming in the human Nature, and in all Respects becoming like to us, Sin only excepted) did; and, by being a Sacrifice for Sin (so the Word Sin signifies in divers Places, as Leviticus iv. 29. Chap. v. 6. 2 Cor. v. 21. and, as I suppose, also Gen. iv. 7.) condemned Sin in his Flesh; he by this Means shewing how hateful it is to God, took a most powerful Course to kill and destroy it. And moreover, the most dearly beloved Son of God, undergoing such extreme Sufferings for our Sins, it is evidently thereby demonstrated what dismal Vengeance those have Reason to expect who shall continue impenitent, and refuse to be reclaimed from them; for, says he, Luke xxiii. 31. If they do these Things in a green Tree, what shall be done in the dry? If God spared not his own most innocent, holy, and only Son, than whom nothing was, or could be, more dear to him, but abandoned him to so shameful, and painful a Death for our Sins, how great and severe Sufferings may we conclude he will inflict upon those Wretches, who dare still to live in wilful Disobedience,*

And

Chap. VII. *The Design of Christianity.* 73

And from the Death of Christ, considered as a Sacrifice, we farther learn, what an Esteem God has for his holy Laws, that he would not abate their Rigour, nor remit the Punishment due to the Transgressors of them, without a Consideration of no meaner Value than the most precious Blood of his own Son.

And, lastly, Christ has laid down his Life at the Appointment of God the Father, for the Purpose of making an Atonement for Sin; this gives all Men unspeakably greater Assurance of the Pardon of true Penitents, than the bare Consideration of the Divine Goodness could ever have done: And so by this Means have we the greatest Encouragement our Hearts can wish for, to become new Men, and return to Obedience; and have all Ground of Jealousy removed, that we have been guilty of such heinous and so often repeated Impieties, as that it may not become the Holiness, and Justice of God to remit them to us, though they should be never so sincerely forsaken by us.

In the *Death* of our Saviour, thus considered, are contained (as we have seen) the strongest and most irresistible Arguments to a holy Life; and I farther add, such as are no less apt to work upon the Principle of *Ingenuity* which is implanted in our Natures, than that of *Self-love*. For who that has the least Spark of it, will not be powerfully inclined to hate all Sin, when he considers that it was the Cause of such direful Sufferings to so incomparable a Person, and infinitely obliging

74 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. I.

a Friend, as Christ? Who but a Creature utterly destitute of that Principle, and therefore worse than a brute Beast, can find in his Heart to take Pleasure in the *Spear* that let out the *Heart-blood* of his most blessed Saviour; and to carry himself towards Sin, as a loving Friend, which was (and still is) the Lord of Glory's worst Enemy?

Again: Has *Jesus Christ* endured, and done so much for our Sakes? And are we able to give ourselves leave to render all his Sufferings and Performances unsuccessful by continuing in *Disobedience*? Can we be willing that he should do, and suffer so many Things in vain? Nay more, can we contribute to the making him do and suffer so? Is this possible?

Has he been crucified for us by the wicked *Jews*, and don't we think *that* enough? But must we ourselves be crucifying him afresh by our Sins, and putting him again to an open Shame, by preferring our base Lusts before him, as the *Jews* did *Barabbas*?

Has he expressed such astonishing Love to us in dying for us, and wo'nt we accept of it? which we certainly refuse to do, while we live in Sin. Hath he purchased eternal Salvation for us, and such great and glorious Things as Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, and which have not entered into the Heart of Man to be conceived by him; and can we persuade ourselves to be so *ungrateful* to him, as well as so *wanting* to ourselves, as to refuse

Chap. VII. *The Design of Christianity.* 75

refuse to receive these at his Hands on those most reasonable Terms on which he offers them?

Has he bought us with such a Price; and can we refuse to be his Servants, and rather chuse to be the Slaves of Satan, the Devil's Drudges?

Where can we find so many strongly inciting Motives to hate and abandon all Sin, as are contained, and very obvious in the *Death* and *Sufferings* of our Saviour for it?

Fifthly, The Death of our Saviour is in a special Manner effectual to the making of us in all Respects virtuous and holy, as he hath thereby procured for us that Grace and Assistance which is necessary to enable us so to be. In regard of his *humbling* himself as he did, and *becoming obedient to the Death of the Cross*, hath God highly exalted him, and given him a Name that is above every Name; that at the Name of Jesus every Knee should bow, of Things in Heaven, and Things in Earth, and Things under the Earth: And that every Tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the Glory of God the Father, Phil. ii. 9, 10, 11. Now, by virtue of the Authority he is by this Means invested and dignified with, and particularly as he is King of his Church, has he sent the Holy Ghost to sanctify us; to excite us to all holy Actions; and to assist us in the Performance of them.

Sixthly, The Death of Christ apparently promotes this great Design, as by his patient Submission to it he vindicated God's Right of *Sovereignty* over all his Creatures, and the Power he
has

76 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. I.

has to require what he pleases, and to dispose of them as seems good to him. Whereas the *first Adam*, by Contumacy, Pride, and Rebellion, put an high Affront upon the Authority of his Maker, and his wretched Posterity followed his Example, and have by that Means done what lay in them to render his *Right* to their Obedience unquestionable; this blessed *second Adam*, by acting directly contrary, *viz.* by *Obedience, Humility, and sub-jecting* himself to the Divine Pleasure, in the severest Expressions and Significations of it, has done publicly, and before the whole World, an infinite Honour to his Father: And his absolute Right of Dominion over his whole Creation, and the Power he has to prescribe to it what Laws he judges fitting (which was before so eclipsed by wicked Sinners) has he, by this Means, in the most signal Manner manifested, and made apparent. And of what Force this is to promote our Holiness and universal Obedience, the dullest Capacity may apprehend.

From what has been said, it appears to be a most plain, and unquestionable Case, that our Saviour in his *Death*, considered according to each of the Notions we have of it in Scripture, had an Eye to the great Work of making Men *holy*; and that this was the *main* Design at which he therein aimed.

And I now add, that whereas it is frequently affirmed in the Holy Scriptures, that the End of Christ's Death was also the *Forgiveness* of our
Sins,

Chap. VII. *The Design of Christianity.* 77

Sins, and the *reconciling* of us to his Father, we are not so to understand those Places, as if these Blessings were absolutely thereby procured for us, or any otherwise than upon Condition of our *effectual believing*, and yielding Obedience to his Gospel. Nor is there any one Thing scarcely of which we are so frequently reminded, as we are of this. Christ died to put us into a Capacity of Pardon; the actual removing of our Guilt is not the necessary and immediate Result of his Death, but suspended till such time as the forementioned Conditions, by the Help of his Grace, are performed by us.

But moreover, it is in order to our being encouraged to sincere Endeavours to forsake all Sin, and to be universally obedient for the time to come, that our Saviour shed his Blood for the Pardon of it: This was intended in his Death, as it is subservient to that Purpose; the Assurance of having all our Sins forgiven, upon our sincere Reformation, being a necessary Motive to it. Therefore has he delivered us from a Necessity of *dying*, that we might *live* to God; and therefore God offers to be in his Son Jesus reconciled to *us*, that we may thereby be prevailed with to be reconciled to *him*. Therefore was the Death of Christ designed to procure our Justification from all Sins past, that we might be by this Means animated to become new Creatures for the time to come. Observe to this Purpose what the divine Author to the *Hebrews* saith, Chap. ix. 13, 14. *If the Blood*

78 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. I.
Blood of Bulls and Goats, and the Ashes of an Heifer
sprinkling the Unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of
the Flesh: How much more shall the Blood of Christ,
who through the eternal Spirit offered himself with-
out Spot to God, purge your Consciences from dead
Works; (for what End? it follows) to serve (or,
in order to your serving) the living God?

And thus much may suffice concerning the Design of our Saviour's Death.

C H A P. VIII.

That it is only promoting the Design of
making Men holy, which the Apostles
aimed at by insisting on the Doctrines of
Christ's Resurrection, Ascension, and
coming again to Judgment.

I MIGHT in the next Place proceed to shew,
that the *Resurrection* of our Saviour carried on
the same Design his *Precepts, Promises, and*
Threatenings, Life, and Death aimed at; but who
knows not that these would all have signified
nothing to the promoting of this or any other
End, if he had always continued in the Grave,
and not risen again, as he foretold he would. *If*
Christ be not risen, says the Apostle, 1 Cor. xv. 13.
then is our preaching vain, and your Faith is also
vain.

Chap. VIII. *The Design of Christianity.* 79

vain. So that whatsoever our Saviour intended in those Particulars, the perfecting and final Accomplishment thereof, must needs be eminently designed in his *Resurrection*. The Apostle *Peter* tells his Countrymen the *Jews*, *Acts* iii. 21. that, *To them first God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless them, in turning every one of them from his Iniquities.* But moreover, we find the Doctrine of *Christ's Resurrection* very much insisted on, by *St. Paul* especially, as a Principle of the *spiritual* and *divine Life* in us; and proposed, as that with which we ought to have, not only a *speculative* and *notional*, but also a *practical* and *experimental* Acquaintance. And he often tells us, it is our Duty to find *that* in our Souls which bears an Analogy to it. He says, *Phil.* iii. 10. That it was his Ambition to know (or feel within himself) the *Power of his Resurrection*, as well as the *Fellowship of his Sufferings*; to have Experience of his being no longer a *dead*, but a *living Jesus*, by his enlivening him, and quickening his Soul with a new Life. And again, *Rom.* vi. 4. that, *Therefore we are buried with him by Baptism unto Death, that like as Christ was raised up from the Dead by the Glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in Newness of Life*; that is, Christians being plunged into the Water in Baptism, signifies their obliging themselves, in a spiritual Sense, to die and be buried with Jesus Christ (which Death, and Burial consist in an utter renouncing, and forsaking all their Sins) that so, answerably to his

80 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. I.
Resurrection, they may live a holy and a godly
Life. And it follows, *Verse 5.* *For if we have been*
planted together in the Likeness of his Death, we shall
be also in the Likeness of his Resurrection; that is,
if we are ingrafted into Christ by Mortification of
Sin, and so imitate his Death, we shall no less
have a Resemblance of his Resurrection, by living
to God, or performing all Acts of Piety and Chri-
stianity. And then, from *Verse 8, to 11*, he thus
proceeds: *Now if we be dead with Christ, we be-*
lieve that we shall (or we will) also live with him:
Knowing that Christ, being raised from the Dead,
dieth no more, Death hath no more Dominion over
him. For in that he died, he died unto Sin once,
(or for Sin once for all) but in that he liveth, he
liveth unto God (that is, in Heaven with God);
Likewise reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto
Sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our
Lord; that is, after the Example of his *Death and*
Resurrection, account ye yourselves obliged to die
to Sin, and to live to the Praise and Glory of
God.

And the same use which the Apostle here makes
of the *Resurrection* of our Saviour, he does also
elsewhere of his *Ascension* and Session at the right
Hand of God, *Coloss. iii. 1, 2.* *If ye then be risen*
with Christ, seek those Things which are above, where
Christ sitteth at the right Hand of God; set your
Affections on Things above, not on Things on the
Earth; for you are dead, that is, in Profession,
having engaged yourselves to renounce your past
wicked

Chap. VIII. *The Design of Christianity.* 81

wicked Life) *and your Life is hid with Christ in God, &c.* that is, and the Life you have by embracing the Christian Religion obliged yourselves to lead, is in Heaven, where Christ is. So that this shews the Informations the Gospel gives us of these Things, to be intended for *practical* Purposes, and Incitements to *Holiness*. And of Christ's *Resurrection*, with his following Advancement, we are frequently reminded, to teach us this most excellent Lesson, that Obedience, Patience, and Humility, are the Way to Glory; and therefore, to encourage us to be Followers of him, to tread in his holy Steps, and make him our Pattern. This we have in the fore-cited Place, *Phil. ii. 5, 6, 7, &c.* and *Heb. xii. 1, 2.* We are exhorted *to lay aside every Weight, and the Sin which doth so easily beset us, and to run with Patience the Race that is set before us; looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our Faith; who for the Joy that was set before him, endured the Cross, despising the Shame, and is set down at the right Hand of the Throne of God:* And Verse 3. *to consider him that endured such Contradiction of Sinners against himself* (that is, especially how he is now rewarded for it) *lest we be weary and faint in our Minds.*

And who can be so ignorant as not to know, that the Meaning of our being so often reminded of our Saviour's *coming again to Judgment*, is to stir us up to all *Holiness* of Conversation? For we are sufficiently told, that we must be judged ac-

G

cording

82 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. I.
according to our *Works*, especially *such Works* as the
Hypocrites of this Age most despise, and leave to
be chiefly performed by their condemned Mora-
lists; as appears from *Matt. xxv. 34.* to the End
of the Chapter. And, lastly, it is very certain,
“ That all the Doctrines of the Gospel, (as merely
“ speculative as some at the first Sight may seem
“ to be) have a Tendency to the promoting of
“ real Righteousness and Holiness, and are re-
vealed for that Purpose &”. But as I did not *there*,
so neither will I *here* proceed to shew it, in all
the several Instances, or in any more than I have
now done; and that for the Reason which is there
given. But besides, I conceive that what has
been discoursed in this Section, is abundantly suf-
ficient to demonstrate what we have undertaken,
viz. That to make Men truly virtuous and holy, is
the Design, the main and ultimate Design of Chri-
stianity.

& See Page 123 of the *Principles and Practices* of
certain moderate Divines of the Church of England,
(abusively called *Latitudinarians*) truly represented,
and defended.

S E C T I O N II.

C H A P. I.

Two Accounts of the Business of making Men holy: The first, That this is to do the greatest Good to Men: And that the Blessing of making Men holy, is of all other the greatest Good; proved by several Arguments, viz. First, That it contains in it a Deliverance from the worst of Evils; and Sin shewed to be the worst.

I Proceed, in the next Place, to shew how it comes to pass, that of all other good Things, the making Mankind truly virtuous and holy, is the *grand and special Design of Christianity*. There are these two Accounts to be given of it.

First, This is to do the greatest Good to Men.

Secondly, This is to do the best Service to God.

First, The making of us really righteous and holy, is the greatest Good that can possibly be done to us. There is no Blessing comparable to

84 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. II.

that of purifying our Natures from corrupt Affections, and enduing them with virtuous and divine Qualities. The wiser Sort of the Heathens themselves were abundantly satisfied of the Truth of this: And therefore the only Design they professed to drive at in their Philosophy, was *the Purgation and perfecting of the human Life*. Hierocles makes this to be the very Definition of it: And by the *Purgation* of Mens Lives, he tells us is to be understood, the cleansing them from the Dregs and Filth of unreasonable Appetites; and by their *Perfection*, the Recovery of that Excellency which reduceth πρὸς τὸν Θεὸν ὁμοίωσιν, to the *Divine Likeness*. Now the Blessing of making Men *holy*, is of all the greatest.

First, Because it contains in it a Deliverance from the *worst of Evils*. They are utterly ignorant of the Nature of *Sin*, who imagine any Evil greater than Sin, or so great. It was the Doctrine of the *Stoicks*, that there is nothing evil but what is *turpe & vitiosum*, vile and vicious. And Tully himself, who professed not to be bound up to the *Placita* of any one Sect of Philosophers, but to be free-minded, and to give his Reason its full Scope and Liberty, takes upon him sometimes most stiffly, and seemingly in very good Earnest, to maintain it, and dispute for it. But as difficult as I find it to brook that Doctrine, as they seem to understand it, that more modest Saying of his in the first Book of his *Tusculan Questions* has, without Doubt, not a little of Truth in it, viz. *That there*

Chap. I. *The Design of Christianity.* 85

there is no Evil comparable to that of Sin^h. Hierocles, a sober Philosopher, and very free from the high-flown Humour, and ranting Genius, of the Stoicks, though he would allow that other Things besides Sin, may be *very grievous and difficult to be borne*, yet he would admit nothing besides this to be *truly evil*; and he gives this Reason for it, viz. Because that certain Circumstances make other Things *good*, that have the Repute of *Evils*; but none can make *this* so. He saith that the Word καλῶς [*well*] can never be joined with any Vice, but so may it with every Thing besides: As it is proper to say concerning such or such a Person, νοσεῖ καλῶς, πένεται καλῶς, he is *well* diseased, he is *well* poor, that is, he is both these to good Purpose, behaving himself in his Sickness and Poverty as he ought to do; but (proceeds he) it can never be said, ἀδικεῖ καλῶς, ἀκολασάνει καλῶς, &c. he doth Injury *well*, or he is *rightly* and as becomes him, intemperate.

Now that Wickedness is the greatest of Evils, is apparent, as it injures Mens *better Part*, their Souls, whereas it lieth in the Power of no other (as the now mentioned Philosopher also observeth) so to do. Do I say, it *injures* them? that's too gentle a Word, it *mars* and *spoils* them; as again that Person in another Place speaks. Other Evils may ruin our Bodies, our Fortunes, &c. and

^h *Nè malum quidem ullum cum turpitudinis malo comparandum.*

86 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. II.

may, I confess, by that Means *disquiet* and *disturb* our Souls; but they can be *depraved* by nought but *Sin*; this alone can deprive them of the Image of God, wherein consists their Excellency. And when I say that Sin undoes *our Souls*, and Sin only, I say that this, and this *alone*, undoes *ourselves*: For (as saith the same brave Man) *Thy Soul is thyself; thy Body thine; and all outward Things, thy Body's.* And the excellent *Simplicius*, speaking of *Death*, has this Saying, that it is only τὸ σῶμα κακόν, ἐκ ἡμῶν, *an Evil to our Bodies, not to us.* And this both the *Stoicks* and *Platonists* much insist upon, and make great Use of it: They stick not to tell us, that it is improper to say that a Man consists of two Parts, whereof the *Body* is one; and that this is not a constituent Part of Man, but only his *Instrument*: That it is but our *Prison* wherein we are confined, our *Leather-bag*, our *Satchel*, our *Case*, our *Sheath*, our *House*, our *Cloathing*, and the like. And we find such a Notion of the *Body* in the Holy Scriptures, as well as in the Heathen Writings. *St. Paul* also calls it *our Cloathing*, *our earthly House*, *our Tabernacle*, 2 Cor. v. 1, 4. *St. Peter* calls his *Body*, this *Tabernacle*; *I think it meet* (says he) *so long as I am in this Tabernacle*, &c. 2 Pet. i. 13. *Knowing that shortly I must put off this Tabernacle*, Verse 14. So that other Evils have that Denomination, because they are so to such Things only (*immediately* I mean) as *belong* to ourselves; but *Sin* is an *immediate* Evil, and the greatest imaginable

Chap. I. *The Design of Christianity.* 87

able to our very *selves* : By whom soever it is entertained, it changes the Man's Nature, spoils his Constitution, and makes him quite another Thing : From a lovely, noble, and excellent, it transforms him into an ignoble, base, and contemptible Creature. We are not ignorant what Names the Scripture bestows upon wicked Men, even those of the *uncleanest*, and most impure *Beasts*. There is no such Filthiness (said *Cicero* ¹) as the *Fæditas Turpificati animi*, that of an unclean Soul : And the Philosophers used to express Vice by *Turpitude* and τὸ αἰσχρὸν, *Filthiness*, as being that which is infinitely disbecoming, below, and unworthy of human Nature. And the wise Man, in his Book of the *Proverbs* says, that *a wicked Man is loathsome and cometh to Shame*. There is no such hideous Monster in Nature as a reasonable Creature living in Contradiction to the Dictates of his Understanding, trampling under Foot the eternal Laws of Righteousness, and opposing himself to the known Will of the great Sovereign of the World, to the Will of him in whom he lives, moves, and has his Being ; to whom alone he is obliged for all he is or has, and for the Capacity he is in of having any thing for the future, of which for the present he is destitute. A Body in which the Head and Feet have exchanged Places, is not more deformed and monstrous than is a vicious Soul : for her *superior* and *governing* Part is sub-

¹ *In Lib. iii. de Officiis.*

88 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. II.

jected to, and lorded over by her *inferior*, and that which was designed by Nature to be kept in Subjection and governed. Her ἡνιοχῆν (as the *Pythagoreans* phrase it) or holder of the Reins, and ruling Faculty, is become the ἡνιοχούμενον, the reined in and ruled Faculty.

I add moreover, that Sin may well be said to spoil and mar Mens Souls; for we read in the Writings of the Apostles, that it *kills* them. *She that liveth in Pleasures is dead, while she liveth, 1 Tim. v. 6. You hath he quickened who were dead in Trespasses and Sins, Eph. ii. 1. St. Jude, speaking of certain ungodly Wretches, says, that they are twice dead, Verse 12. And the very same Notion had divers of the Heathens also. Pythagoras used to put a νεκράφιον, or empty Coffin in the Place of that Scholar who left his School, to betake himself to a vicious and debauched Life, as thereby signifying that he was dead, dead as to his nobler Part. And his Followers tell us, that the Souls of Men died, when they apostatized from God, and cast off the Divine Life. And such a one, as in whom Sin reigneth, may be called a dead Man, because, according to them, the Definition of a Man belongs not to him, nor does he any longer deserve the Name of a reasonable Creature. The Philosopher we have so often quoted, (and shall have Occasion to do it oftener) will have Wickedness to be the Death of the reasonable Nature: And Simplicius doubts not to assert, that a*
Man

Chap. I. *The Design of Christianity.* 89

Man that is drowned in Sensuality, hath no more of Reason in him than a brute Creature.

To return to *God* and to a *right Mind*, to be without *God* and without *Understanding*, were of one and the same Signification with those excellent Men. And our Saviour tells us, that the Prodigal came to himself when he resolved upon returning to his Father's House; as if while he persisted in Disobedience, he was as very a *Brute*, as those whose Husks he fed on, and had utterly lost his *Understanding*. Though that last Saying of *Simplicius* may seem somewhat hyperbolical, yet this following one of *Hierocles* has not the least of a *Figure* in it, viz. That wicked Men render the *Reason* that remains in them *more base and wretchedly contemptible than the vilest Slave*. They use it altogether in Matters of very *bad*, or (at best) of most *mean* Concern; and therefore, as upon that Account it were better, so upon this it would be even as well, if they had none at all; for the *Sagacity* that is in *Beasts* is not less serviceable to them, than is the *Reason* of a wicked Man to him: Nay, had he only that *Sagacity* which is observable in many unreasonable Creatures, it might stand him in as much stead as his *Reason* does, and perhaps more. So that from what has been discoursed, it appears evidently that *Wickedness* is the *worst, incomparably the worst of Evils*; that it is so in its own *Nature*, as well as in its *Consequences*; and therefore, to deliver us from it, by purifying our *Lives* and *Natures*, is to confer upon us the
greatest

90 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. II.
greatest Blessing, and consequently is an Undertaking, of all others, the most worthy of the Son of God.

CHAP II.

The Second Argument, viz. That the Blessing of making Men holy is accompanied with all other that are most desirable, and which do best deserve to be so called: Particularly with the Pardon of Sin, and God's special Love: And that those Things of which sensual Persons are most desirous, are eminently to be found in that Blessing.

SEcondly, This is the greatest Blessing, because it is accompanied with all other that are most desirable, and which *best* deserve to be so called. Where Sin is sincerely forsaken, it will certainly be *pardoned*: The *Nature* of God is such as speaks him most ready to be reconciled to a true Convert. Our Iniquities alone make (or can make) a Separation betwixt us and our God, and our *Sins* only hide his Face from us: But the *Cause* being removed, the *Effect* ceases. When the divine Grace which is offered to Sinners, becomes effectual to
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Chap. II. *The Design of Christianity.* 91

the turning any one from his evil Ways, God's Favour naturally returns to him; even as naturally as the Sun's Light into those Places, where that which before intercepted between it and them, is taken away. He is of so infinitely benign, and gracious a Nature, that no Man can continue an Object of his Displeasure one Moment longer than while he is *incapable* of his Favour; and nothing, I say, but Sin and Wickedness (as he has often enough assured us) can make Men so: Nay, a holy Soul is ever the Object of his dearest, and most special Love. He is not only *Friends* with, but *takes Pleasure* in those who *fear* him, *Psalme* clxvii. 11. He is said to make his Residence within such Persons, so great is the Delight that he takes in them. *Isaiah* lxvi. 1, 2. *Thus saith the Lord, the Heaven is my Throne, and the Earth my Footstool, Where is the House that ye build unto me? And where is the Place of my Rest? For all those Things have mine Hand made, and all those Things have been, saith the Lord: But to this Man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite Spirit, and trembleth at my Word.* *John* xiv. 23. *Jesus said unto him, If any Man love me, he will keep my Words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our Abode with him.* And it is said particularly of him that dwelleth in Love (which is the fulfilling of the Law) *that he dwelleth in God, and God in him.* And I might shew that the Heathens themselves had this very Notion. It was a Saying used by the *Pythagoreans*,

92 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. II.

reans, that God has not in the whole Earth a more familiar Place of Residence than a pure Soul.

And *Apollo* is introduced as speaking thus ;

Εὐσεβείων δὲ βροτῶν γάνυμι τόσον ὅσον Ὀλύμπῳ.

*To dwell in Heav'n pleases me not more than
Within the Soul of a religious Man.*

And *Hierocles*, which recites that Verse, himself asserts, that *God hateth no Man* ; but as for the good *Man*, he embraceth him with an extraordinary and surpassing Affection. The righteous Lord loving Righteousness, his Countenance cannot but behold the Upright. Wheresoever he finds any Impressions of true Goodness, as he cannot but highly approve them, so is it not possible but they should attract his singular Love to those which are the Subjects of them : According to that Measure and Proportion which any one participates of his Goodness, he must needs have a Share in his Grace and Kindness. A holy Person is a Man after God's own Heart, as his Servant *David* is said to be : He is a Man that carries his Image, and bears a Resemblance to him, and upon that Account he cannot fail to be very dearly beloved by him. Now I need not go about to prove, that there is no Blessing whatsoever but is implied in an Interest in the Divine Love ; and especially in such a Love as that of which we have shewed good Men are made the Objects.

It

Chap. II. *The Design of Christianity.* 93

It might be here shewn also, that those Things which sensual and carnal Persons are most desirous of, viz. *Riches, Honours, and Pleasures*, are eminently to be found in the Blessing of which we are now discoursing; and indeed, those which best deserve to be so called, and are in the properest Sense so, no where else. Nothing enriches a Man like the Graces of God's holy Spirit: What St. Peter said of *Meekness*, is true of all the Virtues; they are *in the Sight of God* (and he judges of Things as they are) *of great Price*^k. They are called *Gold tried in the Fire*, Rev. iii. 18. The *true and our own Riches*, Luke xvi. 12. Which is as much as to say, that these only are *ours*, and all but these are false and counterfeit: These enrich our *Souls*, which alone (as was said) deserve to be called *ourselves*, and will abide by us when all other have bid *adieu* to us. These as much excel in true Value and Worth all those Things which the World calls *Riches*, as do our immortal Spirits transcend our frail and corruptible Carcasses. It was one of the Maxims of the *Stoicks*, ὅτι μόνος ὁ σοφὸς πλέσσει, that *the wise* (whereby they meant the truly virtuous) Man is the only *rich* Man. And Tully hath this Saying upon it: *A Man's Chest cannot properly be called rich, but his Mind only: And though thy Coffers be full, so long as*

^k *Nilil neq; meum est neq; cujusquam, quod auferri, quod eripi, quod amitti potest.* Cicero in Paradoxis.

94 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. II.

*I see thee empty, I shall not think thee a rich Man*¹. And, says Hierocles, *All Things that are without a Man's Soul, are but little and insignificant Trifles.* And the Righteous, says Solomon, *is more excellent than his Neighbour*; or he is of greater Worth than any other Person who is not righteous, *Prov. xii. 26.*

Nothing, again, makes Men *so honourable* as Virtue and true Goodness, or *at all* truly so. Seeing he and he alone who is endued with it, lives up to his highest Principle, like a Creature possessed of a Mind and Reason; nay, this Man is moreover (as was said) like to God himself, and imitates his glorious Perfections, *viz.* his moral ones. And therefore, well might Wisdom say as she does, *Prov. viii. 18. Riches and Honour are with me.* To overcome our unruly Lusts, and keep in Subjection all impetuous Desires and inordinate Appetites, makes us more deservedly glorious than was Alexander or Julius Cæsar; for he that thus acts, has subdued those that mastered those mighty Conquerors. And such a one has Praise of God, of the holy Angels, and of all Men who are not Fools, and whose Judgments he has Cause to value. *He that is slow to Anger is better than the Mighty; and he that ruleth his Spirit than he that taketh a City, Prov. xvi. 32.*

¹ *Animus hominis dives, non arca appellari potest. Quamvis illa sit plena, dum te inanem videbo, divitem non putabo.* In Paradox.

And

Chap. II. *The Design of Christianity.* 95

And no Pleasures are comparable to those which immediately result from Virtue and Holiness; for that Man's Conscience is a very *Heaven* to him who busies himself in the Exercise of it. While we do thus, we act most *agreeably* to the right Frame and Constitution of our Souls; and consequently most *naturally*; and all the Actions of *Nature* are confessedly very sweet and pleasant. Of this also very many of the Heathens had a great Sense; even those of them which much doubted of another Life wherein Virtue is rewarded, commended very highly the Practice of it, for this Reason, that it is a Reward to itself. *Simplicius*, in his Comment upon *Epictetus*, hath this observable Saying, that the Observation of the Rules of Virtue in that Book prescribed, will make Men so happy and blessed even in *this* Life, that they shall not need *to be promised any Reward after Death*, though that also will be sure to follow.

These Things, I say, might be insisted on in this Place, but they are such large and spacious Fields of Discourse, that should we make any considerable Entrance into them, we shall find it no easy Matter to get out of them. I therefore proceed.

C H A P.

C H A P. III.

The third Argument, viz. That whatsoever other Blessings a Man may be supposed to have who is utterly destitute of Holiness, they cannot stand him in so much Stead, as only to make him not miserable. And all evil and corrupt Affections shewed to be greatly tormenting in their own Nature, and innumerable sad Mischiefs to be the necessary Consequence of yielding Obedience to them.

THirdly, Whatsoever other Blessings a Man may be supposed to have, who is utterly destitute of this of Holiness, they cannot stand him in so much Stead as but to make him *not miserable*. We may by the first Particular, and what was said upon it, be sufficiently convinced of the Truth of this: But I farther add, That sinful Lusts are extremely troublesome, disquieting, and painful. *The Wicked* (saith the Prophet *Isaiab*) *is like the troubled Sea which cannot rest, whose Waters cast up Mire and Dirt.* The Labyrinths in which Sin involves Men, are innumerable; its Ways are so full of intricate Turnings, and Windings, that they sadly perplex those poor
Crea-

Chap. III. *The Design of Christianity.* 97

Creatures who walk in them; and it is impossible but they should do so. The greatest *outward* Inconveniencies, and disastrous Misfortunes, are frequently (as might be *largely* shewn) occasioned by them; but Vexations of Mind, and troublesome Thoughts, are their constant and never-failing Effects. Tully, in the fore-mentioned Book, says thus to the vicious Man, *Thy Lusts torment thee, all Sorts of Cares oppress thee, and both Day and Night torture thee* ^m. And Hierocles says, *It is necessary that the worst Life should be most miserable; and the best most pleasant, and delightful* ⁿ. Covetousness and Ambition put Mens Minds upon the Rack to contrive Ways of enriching and advancing themselves: And when they have attained to so large a Proposition of earthly *Profits*, or so high a degree of *Honour* as they at first designed, they are *so* far from being at *Ease* and *Rest* (as they vainly promised to themselves they should) that their *Cravings* increase with their *Fortunes*; and, in the midst of their Abundance, they continue in the same Straits which at first afflicted them. Nay, so impetuous is the Fury of those Lusts, that they drive them into still greater; and cause in *their* Souls who are possessed by them, a more pungent and a quicker Sense of Want

^m *Tuæ libidines te torquent, te ærumnæ premunt omnes, tu dies noctesq; cruciaris.*

ⁿ — ἐξ ὧν λυπηρότατον ἀνάγκη εἶναι τὸν κάκιστον βίον, τρυφήν δὲ τὸν ἄριστον.

than they felt when their Condition was most mean, and their Estate at the lowest. Nor is this Mischief any other than a natural and unavoidable Consequent of forsaking God; (who is, as the Scriptures call him, the REST; and, as *Plato*, the CENTER of Souls) and of seeking Satisfaction in such Things, as are infinitely *too little* for their vast Capacities; as the forementioned, and all worldly Enjoyments are.

With what a Multitude of tormenting Cares is *Independency* on God, and *Distrust* of his Providence perpetually attended? How impossible is it to give a comprehensive and just Catalogue of the many Mischiefs, and Miseries that are the necessary Products and genuine Offspring of *Intemperance*, and *Lasciviousness*? *Solomon* enumerates *some* of the Evils that are the Fruits of the *former* of these, *Prov.* xxiii. 29. but to give a *perfect* Account of them would be an endless Work. And as for the *latter*, besides the loathsome and painful Disease which is ordinarily the Consequence of satisfying the Cravings of that filthy Vice, the *unclean* Person is continually in a *restless* Condition, and, as it were, in a *constant* Fit of a *burning Fever*; the evil Accidents too which are occasioned by it are so many, that *they* cannot be reckoned. The *Epicureans*, though they placed Man's chief Happiness in *corporeal* Pleasures, strictly, notwithstanding, forbid *Adultery*, because (as they said) instead of performing its Promise of Pleasure, it robs Men of it.

He

Chap. III. *The Design of Christianity.* 99

He who is *proud*, and *highly conceited* of himself, is disordered and discomposed by the least slighting Word, or Neglect of Respect, and (I had almost said) by the smallest Commendation of his Neighbour too; and it lies in the Power of any sorry Creature, when he list, to afflict his Mind.

The *inward* sad Effects of *Envy* and *Malice* are sufficiently observable in the *dismal Countenances* of those that are under the Power of them; and these hateful, and devilish Lusts eat into, and prey upon, the very Hearts of those in whose Breasts they lodge; and are like *Fire* in their Bosoms incessantly torturing them: Not to say any thing of the many *outward*, and most direful Mischiefs which are caused by a full Satisfaction of them. In short, there is not any one inordinate Affection °, but is so disturbing and disquieting a Thing in its own Nature, that it cannot but make those who are in Subjection to it, though they should have never so many good Things to set against it, exceeding miserable in *this*, as well as in the *other* World. So that, had our Saviour come into the World, only upon such a Design as the carnal *Jews* expected *their Messiah* would,

° *Qui Appetitus longius evagantur; &c. Et non satis ratione retinentur, &c. ab iis non modo animi perturbantur, sed etiam Corpora: Licet ora ipsa cernere iratorum, aut eorum qui aut libidine aliquâ aut metu commoti sunt, aut voluptate nimîa gessiunt: quorum omnium vultus, voces, motus, statusque mutantur.* Cicero, Lib. i. de Officiis.

100 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. II.

viz. that of making us Partakers of a mere *temporal* Happiness, he must, in order to the succeeding of it, *chiefly* have concerned himself to make us *holy*.

If it were possible (as it has been shewn it is not) that a wicked Man should have *God's Pardon*, this would not make him cease to be miserable; all it could signify would be no more than an Exemption from being immediately by *him* punished: But though the Divine Majesty should not in the least afflict him, his very *Lusts* would be of themselves no light Punishment, but such as under which he could never enjoy himself in this Life, but will be found to be intolerable in the Life to come: Seeing there will *then* be nothing to be met with that can at all suit with his sensual Inclinations, or that will have any Aptness in it to please and gratify them; whereas now all Places abound with such Things as are fit for that Purpose; as are able, I say, to gratify, though not to satisfy such Appetites. So that this Man's Condition in the *future* State must needs be very exactly like to his, who is even parch'd and dried up with excessive Thirst, but can by no Means obtain wherewithal to quench it; no nor yet so much as a little to slake, and mitigate the Pain of it; as he in this State very frequently makes a shift to do.

Were it possible that *Christ's Righteousness* could be *imputed* to an *unrighteous* Man, I dare boldly affirm, that it would signify as little to his
Happi-

Chap. III. *The Design of Christianity.* 101

Happiness, while he continues so, as would a gorgeous and splendid Garment to one that is almost starved with Hunger, or that lies rack'd by the torturing Diseases of the Stone or Colick.

And could we suppose such a Man to be never so much an Object of the divine *Benevolence*, nay, and *Complacency* too (as there is nothing less supposable) this could not make him, he continuing wicked, so much as *not miserable*; he, being rendered by his Wickedness, utterly incapable of such Effects of the Love of God, as could have upon him so good an Influence.

Nay, farther, were our Fancies so very powerful, as that they could place him even in *Heaven* itself; so long as he continueth unturned from his Iniquities, we could not imagine him happy *there*; nay, he would carry a *Hell* to Heaven with him, and keep it there. It is not the being in a *fine Place* that can make any one cease to be miserable, but the being in a *good State*; and the *Place* Heaven, without the heavenly *State*, will signify nothing. An unhealthful and diseased *Body* will have never the more Ease for residing in a *Prince's Court*, nor will a sick and unsound Soul have an End put to its Unhappiness, though it should live for ever in the Presence of *God* himself. That Saying to this Purpose well deserves our repeating, which I find in the excellent Book called, THE CAUSES OF THE DECAY OF CHRISTIAN PIETY: Or, An Impartial Survey of the Ruins of the Christian Religion, un-

102 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. II.

dermined by unchristian Practice : *Alas, what Delight would it be to the Swine to be wrapped in fine Linen, and laid in Odours : His Senses are not gratified by any such Delicacies, nor would he feel any thing besides the Torment of being withheld from the Mire. And as little Complacency would a brutish Soul find in those purer and refined Pleasures, which can only upbraid, not satisfy him* P.

It is not to be doubted that such Habits of Mind as Men carry *hence* with them, they shall keep in the *other* State ; and therefore, if we leave this Earth with any unmortified and reigning Lusts, they will not only make us incapable of the Happiness of *Heaven*, but also of *any* Happiness : For there will be (as was but now intimated) no Satisfaction, or so much as *Gratification* of *carnal* and *brutish*, much less of *devilish* Appetites, in the celestial Mansions ; and therefore, they cannot be otherwise than very grievously painful to the Person who is fraught with them ; though, I say, we could suppose him to be safely possessed of those glorious Habitations.

To sum up all I shall say on this Argument ; I fear not to assert, that Omnipotency itself cannot make a wicked Person happy, no not so much as *negatively* so (except he should be annihilated)

P This is extracted from an excellent Book, well deserving the *most serious* Consideration, and Recommendation of every true Friend to Religion, written by the Author of the *Whole Duty of Man*.

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Chap. IV. *The Design of Christianity.* 103

any otherwise, than by first giving him his Grace for the subduing, and Mortification of his Lusts: And that to deliver one from all Misery, while Sin is vigorous in his Soul, and bears the Sway there, is not an Object of *any* Power, and implies in it a palpable, and apparent Contradiction: Since *Misery* is no less of the Essence of Sin, and Wickedness, than Light is of the Sun; so that it is impossible they should ever be separated from one another, but that they must, like the Twins of *Hippocrates*, live and die together.

C H A P. IV.

The fourth Argument, viz. That Holiness, when perfected, is Blessedness itself; and the Glory of Heaven consists chiefly in it: This no new Notion: Some Observations on it by the Way.

BUT in the last Place, well may we call *Holiness* the greatest of Blessings; for when it is perfected, it is *Blessedness* itself; and the *Glory of Heaven* is not only entailed upon it, but chiefly consists in it. *Beloved* (says St. John) *Now are we the Sons of God; but it doth not appear what we shall be; but this we know, that when he ap-*

104 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. II.

peareth, we shall be like him, &c. As if he should say, I cannot tell you particularly, and distinctly, what the *Blessedness* of the other Life will be, but of this I am sure, that *Likeness to God* is the general Notion of it; and that it consists, for the Substance thereof, in a perfect Resemblance of the Divine Nature. The Happiness of Heaven lies not in a mere fixing of our Eyes upon the Divine Perfections, and in admiring of them, but mainly in so beholding and contemplating them, as thereby to be changed into the express and lively Image of them; and in having so affecting a Sense of God's infinite Justice and Goodness, Purity and Holiness, as will make the deepest Impressions of those most amiable Qualities on our own Souls.

The Glory which Heaven confers upon its Inhabitants, consists in not so much in an external View of God and Christ, as in a real and plentiful Participation of their glorious Excellencies; whereby are chiefly to be understood those which are implied in that general Word *Holiness*; for as for their other Attributes, such as *Knowledge, Power, &c.* the Devils themselves, who are most of all Creatures unlike them, have a large Measure of them.

This *Blessedness* principally implies a rapturous Love of God, a *feeling*, as well as *understanding*, the Goodness which is in him; an inseparable Conjunction of the Faculties of our Souls with him, and a perfect Assimilation of our Natures to him. The Felicity of Heaven is an operative
 Thing,

Chap. IV. *The Design of Christianity.* 105

Thing, full of Life and Energy, which advances all the Power of Mens Souls into a Sympathy with the Divine Nature, and an absolute Compliance with the Will of God, and thus makes him to become all in all to them. So that the Happiness of Heaven, and perfect Holiness, are by no Means to be accounted Things of a different Nature, but two several Conceptions of one and the same Thing, or rather, two Expressions of one and the same Conception. *All that Happiness* (as said the learned and pious Mr. *John Smith*) *of which good Men shall be made Partakers, as it cannot be borne up upon any other Foundation than true Goodness, and a godlike Nature within us, so neither is it distinct from it.*

Neither are we to look upon this as any upstart or late Notion, for our ancient Divines have long since taught it, in this Saying, which was frequently used by them, viz. "*Grace is Glory begun, and Glory is Grace perfected.*"

And I cannot but observe, by the Way, that those who have considered this, will need no other Argument to satisfy them, That *that* Talk of some (that it is mere servile Obedience, and below the Ingenuity, and Generosity of a Christian Spirit, to serve God for Heaven, as well as for the good Things of this Life only) is very grossly ignorant, very childish prattle: Since, to serve God in Hopes of Heaven, according to its true Notion, is to serve him for himself; and to express the sincerest, and also the most ardent Affection to
him,

106 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. II.

him, as well as Concernment for our own Souls. And therefore, it could not but highly become the Son of God himself, to *endure the Cross, and despise the Shame, for the Joy that was set before him*, taking that Joy in no other Sense than has been generally understood, viz. for the Happiness of Heaven consisting in a full Enjoyment and undisturbed Possession of the blessed Deity: Nor is there any Reason why we should enquire after any other Signification of that Word, which may exclude *this*.

And, on the other Hand, to be diligent in the Service of God for fear of Hell, understanding it as a State perfectly opposite to that which we have been describing, is in a like Manner, from a Principle of Love to God and true Goodness, as well as Self-love, and is no more unworthy of a Son of God, than of a mere Servant. And thus the Truth of this Proposition, *That to make Men holy is to confer upon them the greatest of Blessings*, by the little which has been said, is made plainly apparent.

C H A P.

C H A P. V.

The second Account of our Saviour's preferring the Business of making Men holy, before any other, viz. That this is to do the best Service to God. An Objection answered against this Discourse of the Design of Christianity.

IT remains, secondly, to be shewn, *That to promote the Business of Holiness in the World, is to do God Almighty the best Service:* And this will be dispatch'd in a very few Words: For is it not, without Dispute, better Service to a Prince to reduce Rebels to their Allegiance, than to procure a Pardon for them under his Seal? This is so evidently true, that to do this latter, except it be in order to the *former* Business, is not at all to *serve* him, nay, it is to do him the greatest of *Disservices*. I need not apply this to our present Purpose. And therefore, to be sure, the Work of making Men holy, and bringing over Sinners to the Obedience of his Father, must needs have been much more in the Eye of our blessed Saviour, than that of delivering us from our deserved Punishment, *simply* and in *itself* considered: For his Love to the Father will be (I hope) universally ac-

108 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. II.

acknowledged to be incomparably greater than it is to *us* Mortals, how great soever it is.

None can question, but that by our Apostacy from God, we have most highly dishonoured him; we have robbed him of a Right which he can never be willing to forego, *viz.* the Obedience which is indispensably due to him, as he is our Creator, continual Preserver, our infinitely bountiful Benefactor, and absolute Sovereign. And therefore it is as little to be doubted, that Christ would in the *first Place* concern himself for the Recovery of that Right. And, but that both Works are carried on together, and inseparably involved in each other, he must necessarily be far more solicitous about the effecting of *this* Design, than of *that* of delivering wicked Rebels from the Mischiefs and Miseries to which they have made themselves liable, by their Disobedience.

So that laying all these Considerations together, what can be more indisputable, than that our Saviour's chief and ultimate Design in coming from Heaven to us, and performing, and suffering all he did for us, was to turn us from our Iniquities, to reduce us to entire and universal Obedience, and to make us Partakers of inward, real Righteousness and true Holiness? And we cannot from this last Discourse but clearly understand, that it is most infinitely *reasonable*, and absolutely *necessary*, that it should be so.

But now if, after all this, it be objected, that I have defended a Notion concerning the *Design of*
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Chap. V. *The Design of Christianity.* 109

Christianity, different from that which hath hitherto been constantly received by all Christians, viz. That it is to display and magnify the exceeding Riches of God's Grace to fallen Mankind, in his Son Jesus: I answer, that he will be guilty of great Injustice, who shall censure me as labouring in this Discourse, to propagate any *new* Notion: For I have endeavoured nothing else but a true Explication of the *old* one, it having been grossly misunderstood, and is still, by very many, to their no small Prejudice. Those therefore who say, that the Christian Religion designs to set forth and glorify the infinite Grace of God in Jesus Christ to wretched Sinners, and withal understand what they say; as they speak most truly, so do they assert the very same Thing that I have done. For (as has been shewn) not only the Grace of God is abundantly displayed and made manifest in the Gospel to Sinners, for this End, that they may thereby be effectually moved and persuaded to forsake their Sins; but also the principal Grace that is there exhibited, consists in delivering us from the *Power* of them. Whosoever will acknowledge *Sin* to be (as we have proved it is) in its own Nature the *greatest of all Evils*, and *Holiness* the *chiefest of all Blessings*, will not find it easy to deny this. And besides (as we have likewise shewn) Men are not capable of God's *pardon*ing Grace, till they have truly repented them of all their Sins, that is, have in Will and Affection sincerely left them: And also,
that

110 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. II.

that if they were capable of it, so long as they continue vile Slaves to their Lusts, that Grace, by being bestowed upon them, cannot make them *happy*; nor yet cause them to cease from being very *miserable*, in regard of their disquieting, and tormenting Nature, in which is laid the Foundation of Hell. The free Grace of God is infinitely more magnified, in *renewing* our Natures, than it could be in the bare *Justification* of our Persons: And to *justify* a wicked Man, while he continueth so, (if it were possible for God to do it) would far more disparage his *Justice*, and *Holiness*, than advance his *Grace*, and *Kindness*; especially since his *forgiving* Sin would signify so little, if it be not accompanied with subduing it.

In short, then God most signally *glorifies* himself in the World, when he most of all communicates himself, that is, his *glorious* Perfections, to the Souls of Men: And then they most *glorify* God, when they most partake of them, and are rendered most like unto him.

But because nothing is, I perceive, more *generally* mistaken, than the Notion of God's glorifying himself, I will add something more for the better understanding of this; and I am conscious to myself that I cannot do it so well, as in the Words of the excellent Man we a while since quoted, Mr. *John Smith* [¶], sometime Fellow of

[¶] See his Select Discourses, Page 409.

Chap. V. *The Design of Christianity.* 111

Queen's College in Cambridge: *When God seeks his own Glory, he endeavours not so much any thing without himself: He did not bring this stately Fabrick of the Universe into Being, that he might for such a Monument of his mighty Power, and Beneficence, gain some Panegyricks or Applause from a little of that fading Breath which he had made. Neither was that gracious Contrivance of restoring lapsed Men to himself, a Plot to get himself some external Hallelujahs, as if he had so ardently thirsted after the Lauds of glorified Spirits, or desired a Choir of Souls to sing forth his Praises: Neither was it to let the World see how magnificent he was: No, it is his own internal Glory which he most loves, and the Communication thereof which he seeks: As Plato sometimes speaks of the Divine Love, it arises not out of Indigency, as created Love does, but out of Fulness and Redundancy: It is an overflowing Fountain, and that Love which descends upon created Beings is a free Efflux from the Almighty Source of Love: And it is well-pleasing to him that those Creatures which he hath made, should partake of it. Though God cannot seek his own Glory so, as if he might acquire any Addition to himself; yet he may seek it so, as to communicate it out of himself. It was a good Maxim of Plato, τὸ θεῶν ἐὸν οὐδὲν ὀρέσκει, There is no Envy in God; which is better stated by St. James, God giveth to all Men liberally,*

112 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. III.
and upbraideth not. *And by that Glory of his which he loves to impart to his Creatures, I understand those Stamps and Impressions of Wisdom, Justice, Patience, Mercy, Love, Peace, Joy, and other divine Gifts, which he bestows freely upon the Minds of Men. And thus God triumphs in his own Glory, and takes Pleasure in the Communication of it.*

I proceed now to consider what *useful Inferences* may be gathered from our past Discourse.

S E C T I O N III.

C H A P. I.

The First Inference.

*That it appears from the past Discourse, that our Saviour has taken the most effectual Course for the Purpose of subduing Sin in us, and making us Partakers of his Holiness. Where it is particularly shewed, that the Gospel gives Advantages infinitely above any those the Heathens had, who were privileged with extraordinary Helps
for*

Chap. I. *The Design of Christianity.* 113

for the Improvement of themselves. And,

1. *That the good Principles which were by natural Light dictated to them, and which Reason, rightly improved, persuaded them to entertain as undoubtedly true, or might have done, are farther confirmed by divine Revelation in the Gospel.* 2. *That of those Principles of which the Heathens, by the highest Improvement of their Reason, could at best conclude but very probable, the Gospel gives us an undoubted Assurance: This shewed in four Instances.* 3. *Four Doctrines shewed to be delivered in the Gospel, of which no Man, without the Assistance of divine Revelation, could ever once have thought; and these contain wonderful Inducements, and Helps to Holiness: The first of which has five more implied in it.*

FIRST, it appears from what has been said to demonstrate, That our Saviour's grand Design in coming into the World, was to subdue Sin in us, and restore the Image of God, which consists in Righteousness, and true Holiness to us: That he has taken the most effectual Course imaginable for that Purpose; and that his Gospel is the most powerful Engine for the battering
I down

114 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. III.

down of all the strong Holds which Sin has raised to itself in the Souls of Men, and the Advancement of us to the highest Pitch of Sanctity, which is to be arrived at by human Nature. This (as has been shewn) was the Business which the Philosophy of the Heathens designed to effect; but, alas, what a weak and inefficacious Thing was it, in Comparison of Christ's Gospel! wherein we have such excellent and Soul-ennobling *Precepts* most perspicuously delivered; and moreover, such mighty *Helps* afforded to enable us, and such infinitely pressing *Motives* and *Arguments* to excite us to the Practice of them.

And it will not be amiss if we particularly shew, what exceeding great Advantages Christians have for the attaining of true Virtue, and the sublimest Degrees thereof, in this State attainable, above any which were ever vouchsafed to the World by the Divine Providence, before our Saviour's Descent into it: And (not to make a formal Comparison between the *Christian* and best *Pagan Philosophy*, this not deserving, upon innumerable Accounts, to be so much as named with that, and much less to dishonour the Religion of our Saviour so far, as at all to compare it with any of those which were professed by Heathenish Nations, or that of the Impostor *Mahomet*, which, as well as those, in not a few Particulars tends greatly even to *corrupt* and *deprave* Mens Natures) we will discourse according to our accustomed Brevity. First, what Advantages the

Chap. I. *The Design of Christianity.* 115

Gospel gives us above those which such Heathens as were privileged with extraordinary Helps for the Improvement of their Understandings, had; and, Secondly, above those with which God's most peculiar People, the Children of *Israel*, were favoured.

First, As for those which the Gospel contains above such as the best and most refined Heathens enjoyed, it will be worth our while to consider,

First, *That the good Principles which were by natural Light dictated to them, and which Reason, rightly improved, persuaded them to entertain as undoubtedly true (or, as they might have done) are farther confirmed by Divine Revelation in the Gospel to us.*

As, *That there is but one God: That he is an absolutely perfect Being, infinitely powerful, wise, just, merciful, &c. That we owe our Lives, and all the Comforts of them to him: That he is our Sovereign Lord, to whom absolute Subjection is indispensably due: That he is to be loved above all Things; and, add also, the main and most important particular Duties which it becomes us to perform to him, our Neighbour, and selves.* We Christians have these Things as plainly declared from Heaven to us, and as often repeated and inculcated, as if there were no other Way to come to the Knowledge of them, but that of *Revelation*. So that (as has been shewn in my Book, entitled, *The Principles and Practices of certain moderate Divines, defended from Misrepresentation, &c.*

116 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. III.

p. 88.) what the Heathens took Pains for, and by the Exercise of their Reason learnt, we have set before our Eyes, and need but read the Gospel in order to our Knowledge of it. It is true, for our Satisfaction whether the Holy Scriptures are divinely inspired, and have God for their Author, it is necessary that we employ our Reason, except we can be contented to be of so very hasty and easy a Belief as to give Credit to Things, and those of greatest Concernment too, we know not why; or to pin our Faith on our Forefathers Sleeves; and so to have no better Bottom for our Belief of the *Bible*, than the *Turks* have for theirs of the *Alcoran*. But although it is necessary that we should exercise here our discursive Faculty, if we will believe as becomes Creatures endued with Reason, yet this is no tedious Task, nor such as we need take *much* Pains about. An unprejudiced Person will soon be abundantly satisfied concerning the Scripture's divine Authority, if he only considers how it is confirmed, and how worthy the Doctrine which it contains is of him whose Name it bears. Now, I say, this little Pains being taken for the Establishment of our Faith in the Holy Scriptures, we cannot but be, at the first Sight, assured of the Truth of the Contents of them: For no Man in his Wits can question *his* Veracity who (as even *natural* Light assures us) is Truth itself.

Secondly, *Those good Principles which the Heathens, by the greatest Improvement of their Reason, could*

could at best conclude but very probable, are made undoubtedly certain by Revelation: As,

First, *That of the Immortality of our Souls.* The vulgar Sort of Heathens, who were apt to believe any thing which was by Tradition handed down to them ('tis confessed) did not seem to doubt of the Truth of this Doctrine, but to take it for granted; which (no Question) is also to be imputed to the special Providence of God, and not merely to their Credulity. But the more learned and sagacious, who would not easily be imposed on, nor believe any farther than they saw cause, though by Arguments drawn from the Notions they had truly conceived of the Nature of human Souls, many of them had undertaken to prove them *immortal*; yet could their Arguments raise the *best* of them no higher than a *great* Opinion of their Immortality. *Cato* read *Plato* of the Immortality of the Soul, as he lay bleeding to Death, with great Delight; but that argues not that he had any more than great *Hopes* of the Truth of it. *Socrates* did so believe it, that he parted with *this* Life in Expectation of *another*; but yet he plainly and ingenuously confessed to his Friends, that it was not *certain*. *Cicero*, who sometimes expresses great Confidence concerning the Truth of it, for the most Part speaks so of it, as any one may see that he thought the Doctrine no better than probable. He discourses of it in his Book *de Senectute*, as that which he rather could not endure to think might be false, than as that of which he had no Doubt

118 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. III.
of the Truth. And after he had there instanced
in several Arguments, which he thought had
Weight in them, for the Proof thereof, and ex-
pressed a Longing to see his Ancestors, and the
brave Men he had once known, and of which he
had heard, read and written, he thus concludes
that whole Discourse, *If I err in believing the Soul's
Immortality, I err willingly; neither so long as I live
will I suffer this Error which so much delights me,
to be wrested from me. But if when I am dead, I
shall be void of all Sense, as certain little Philosophers
think, I do not fear to have this Error of mine
laugh'd at by dead Philosophers* ^a.

But now the Gospel has given us the highest
possible Assurance of the Truth of this Doctrine;
Life and Immortality are said to be brought to Light
by it: He who declared himself to be the Son of
God with Power, gave Men a *sensible* Demonstra-
tion of it in his own Person, by his Resurrection
from the Dead, and Ascension into Heaven: And
both by himself, and his Apostles (who were also
endued with a Power of working the greatest of
Miracles, for the Confirmation of the Truth of
what they said) very frequently, and most plainly
preached it.

Secondly, *The Doctrine of Rewards and Punish-
ments in the Life to come* (which is for Substance

^a *Quod si in hoc erro, quod animos hominum immortale
esse credam, libenter erro: nec mihi errorem, quo delector,
dum vivo, extorqueri volo. Sin mortuus, &c.*

Chap. I. *The Design of Christianity.* 119

the same with the former) according to our Behaviour in this Life, the learned Heathens generally declared their Belief of; which they grounded upon the Justice, Purity and Goodness of the divine Nature. They considered that good Men were often exercised with great Calamities, and that bad Men very frequently were greatly prosperous, and abounded with all earthly Felicities; and therefore thought it very reasonable to believe that God would in another Life shew his Hatred of Sin, and Love of Goodness, by making a plain Discrimination between the Conditions of virtuous and wicked Persons, by punishing these, and rewarding those without Exception. But this, though it was, in their Opinion, a very *probable* Argument, yet they looked not on it as that which amounted to a *Demonstration*: For they could not but be aware, that the Doctrine which was so generally received by them (*viz.* that Virtue is, in all Conditions, a Reward, and Vice a Punishment to itself) very much blunted the Edge of it: And that other very harsh one, that all Things besides Virtue and Vice are ἀδιάφορα, neither good nor evil, rendered it (as the perfect *Stoicks* seemed too well to understand) too insignificant. But I must confess that *Hierocles*, who (as has been said) not admitted that Notion, but in a very qualified Sense, says of those who think their Souls mortal (and, consequently, that Virtue will hereafter have no Reward) that when they dispute in the Behalf of Virtue, κομμεύονται μᾶλλον, ἢ ἀντιθέσθαι, they

120 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. III.
rather talk wittily, than truly, and in good Earnest.
The excellent *Socrates* himself, when he was going to drink off the fatal Drug, thus said to those who were then present with him, "I am now going
" to end my Days, whereas your Lives will be
" prolonged; but whether you or I, upon *this*
" Account, are the more happy, is known to none
" but God only:" intimating that he did not look upon it as *absolutely certain* that he should have any Reward in another World, for so heroically virtuous an Act, as chusing Martyrdom for the Doctrine of the Unity of the Godhead. But now, what is more frequently, or clearly declared in the Gospel, than that there will be Rewards and Punishments in the World to come suitable to Mens Actions in this World? than, that Christ will come a second Time to judge the World in Righteousness, and that *all must appear before his Judgment-seat, to receive according to what they have done, whether it be good, or whether it be evil,* 2 Cor. v. 10.

Thirdly, *That Mens Sins shall be forgiven upon true Repentance*, from the Consideration of the Goodness, and Mercy of God, the Heathens were likewise persuaded, or rather hoped: But we Christians have the strongest Assurance imaginable given us of it, by the most solemn and often reiterated Promises of God; and not only that *some* or *most*, but also that *all without Exception*; and the most heinous Impieties, upon Condition of their

Chap. I. *The Design of Christianity.* 121

their being sincerely forsaken, shall in, and through Christ be freely forgiven.

Fourthly, *The Doctrine of God's Readiness to assist Men by his special Grace, in their Endeavours after Virtue*, could be no more, at the best, than probable, in the Judgment of the Heathens, but we have in the Gospel the most express Promises of it, for our mighty Encouragement. Tully in his Book *de Naturâ Deorum* says, that their City Rome, and Greece, had brought forth many singular Men, of which it is to be believed, none arrived to such a Height *nisi Deo juvante*, but by the Help of God. And after he tells us, that *Nemo vir magnus sine aliquo afflatu Divino unquam fuit*, No excellent Man was ever made so but by some divine Afflation. And *Pythagoras*, in his Golden Verses, exhorts Men to pray unto God for Assistance in doing what becomes them :

— ἀλλ' ἔρχεν ἐπ' ἔργον
Θεοῖσιν ἐπευξάμενος τελέσαι.

And *Hierocles* (with whom I confess myself so enamoured, that I can scarcely ever forbear to present my Reader with his excellent Sayings, when there is Occasion ;) he, I say, upon this Clause of *Pythagoras*, has a Discourse concerning the Necessity of our Endeavours after Virtue, on the one Hand, and of the divine Blessing to make them successful on the other, which I have often admired. And even *Seneca* himself, very unlike

122 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. III.

a Stoick, says, *Bonus vir sine Deo nemo est*, &c. No Man can be made good without God; for can any one raise up himself without his Help?

But none of these could have *Assurance*, that God would not deny his special Assistance to any that seriously seek after it; especially since Men have brought themselves into a State of Imbecility and great Impotence, through their own Default. But of this, I say, the Gospel gives all Men very serious Offers, and assures them, if they be not wanting to themselves, they shall obtain it. Hence our Saviour saith, *Ask, and it shall be given unto you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh, receiveth, and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened.* If a Son shall ask Bread of any that is a Father, will he give him a Stone? Or if he ask a Fish, will he for a Fish give him a Serpent? Or if he ask an Egg, will he offer him a Scorpion? If ye then being evil, know how to give good Gifts unto your Children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit unto them that ask him? Luke xi. 9, &c. And the same Thing is told us by St. James, in these Words, Chap. i. 5. *If any of you lack Wisdom, let him ask it of God, that giveth to all Men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him.* Antoninus the Philosopher puts Men upon praying for a good Mind above all Things; but all the Encouragement he could give was, *καὶ δεώμεθα τὴν γνῶσιν*, and see what will come of it^b.

^b Lib. ix. Sect. 40.

Thirdly,

Chap. I. *The Design of Christianity.* 123

Thirdly, We have *other* Doctrines made known to us by the Gospel, of which no Man could ever without divine Revelation, in the least have dreamed. As,

First, *That God has made miserable Sinners the Objects of such transcendent Kindness, as to give them his only-begotten Son.* And there are these five Doctrines implied in this, which are each of them very strong Motives, and Incentives to Holiness, viz.

1. That God Almighty has made such Account of us, and so concerned himself for our Recovery out of that wretched Condition we had by sinning against him plunged ourselves into, as to send his own Son from Heaven, to shew us on what Terms we may be recovered, and also in his Name even to *pray*^c, and *beseech* us to comply with them. That he should send no meaner a Person than one who was the *Brightness of his Glory, and the express Image of his Person, by whom also he made the Worlds*^d, upon this Errand, is such a Motive to Holiness as one would think no Sinner could be able to stand out against. That God should send an Ambassador from Heaven to assure us that he is reconcileable, and bears us Good-will, notwithstanding our high Provocations of him, and to lay before us all the Parts of that Holiness which is necessary to restore our Natures to his own Likeness, and so to make us

^c 2 Cor. v. 20.

^d Heb. i. 2, 3.

capable

124 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. III.

capable of enjoying Blessedness; and most pathetically moreover to entreat us to do what lies in us to put them in Practice, that so it may be to Eternity well with us; and that this Ambassador should be such a one also as we now said; never was there so marvellous an Expression of the Divine Love; and therefore one would conclude it perfectly irresistible by every Person who has not extirpated out of his Nature all Ingenuity.

2. That this Son of God conversed upon equal Terms with Men, and was incarnate for their Sakes. *Great is the Mystery of Godliness, God manifested in the Flesh* *. That he should become the Son of Man, submit to be born of a Woman, is a Demonstration that God is so far from having cast off human Nature, that, (as much as it is depraved) he bears a very wonderful Good-will still to it, and has a real Desire to re-advance, and dignify it: Even this, simply considered, and without joining with it the Consideration of the *Design* of it, might make us conclude this; seeing Christ's taking *our* Nature is the bringing of it so near to the *Divine*, as to lodge it within one, and the self-same Person. And therefore, besides the Motive to Holiness drawn from God's infinite *Love* therein expressed, this Doctrine contains another very powerful one, *viz.* That it must needs be the vilest Thing to dishonour our Nature by Sin and Wickedness,

* 1 Tim. iii. 16.

Chap. I. *The Design of Christianity.* 125

and far more so, than it was before the Incarnation of *Jesus Christ*; as it may now be properly said, that it is in his Person advanced above even the Nature of *Angels*; for him who is invested with it they themselves worship: And how can any Christian while he considers this, be able to forbear thus to reason with himself? Shall I, by harbouring filthy Lusts, debase that Nature in my own Person, which God has to such an infinite Height exalted in his *Son's*? God forbid. What an additional Motive is this, to do as *Pythagoras* advised his Scholars, in these Words, *Above all Things revere, and stand in Awe of thyself*^f. Do nothing that is disbecoming and unworthy of so excellent a Nature, as thine is.

3. That this Son of God taught Men their Duty by his own Example, and did himself perform among them what he required of them. Now that he should tread before us every Step of that Way, which he hath told us leadeth to eternal Happiness, and commend those Duties which are most ungrateful to our corrupt Inclinations, by his own Practice; our having so brave an Example is no small Encouragement to a chearful Performance of all that is commanded: For how honourable a thing must it needs be to imitate the only begotten Son of God, and who is God himself! How glorious to follow such a Pattern! Those who have any thing of true Ge-

^f Πάντων δὲ μάλιστα αἰσχύνησθαι σεαυτόν.

nerosity,

126 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. III.

nerosity, cannot but find themselves, by the Consideration hereof, not a little provoked to abandon all Sin, and to set themselves very heartily to the Performance of whatsoever Duties are required of them. And as for *those*, which we are so apt to look upon as unworthy of us, and too low for us (such as meekly putting up of Affronts; and condescending to the meanest Offices for the serving of our Brethren) how can *his* Spirit be too lofty for them, who considers *Christ's* was not. Now these are all such Motives and Helps to Holiness, the like to which none but those who have the Gospel, ever had.

4. That this Son of God was an expiatory Sacrifice for us. We have already shewn what cogent Arguments to all holy Obedience are herein contained.

5. That this Son of God being raised from the Dead, and ascended into Heaven, is our High Priest there, and *ever lives to make Intercession* with his Father *for us* *. The Heathens, it is confessed, had a Notion of *Dæmons* negotiating the Affairs of Men with the supreme God; but they could never have imagined in the least that they should be so highly privileged, as to have one who is the begotten Son of this God, and infinitely above all Persons dear to him, for their perpetual Mediator and Intercessor. I need not say what an Encouragement this is to an holy Life.

* Heb. vii.

Chap. I. *The Design of Christianity.* 127

And as the Doctrine of God's giving his Son, which contains the five forementioned Particulars, is such as the highest Improvement of Reason could never have caused any thing like it to have entered our Thoughts, or that is comparable thereunto, for the effectual provoking of Men to the Pursuance of all Holiness of Heart and Life: So,

Secondly, *The Doctrine of his sending the Holy Ghost, to move and excite us to our Duty, and to assist, chear, and comfort us in the Performance of it,* may go along with it. How could it have once been thought, without divine Revelation, that a Person endued with the divine Nature, with infinite Power and Goodness, should take it upon him as his Office and peculiar Province, to assist Mens Weakness in the Prosecution of Virtue? But of this the Gospel assures us; as also that those who do not resist, and repel his good Motions, shall be sure to have always the Superintendency of this blessed Spirit, and that he will never forsake them, but abide with them for ever, and carry them from one Degree of Grace to another, till at length it is consummate, and made perfect in Glory. And to this I add,

Thirdly, *The Doctrine of our Union with Christ through this Spirit:* Which Union (to speak in the Words of the learned Dr. Patrick in his *Mensa Mystica*) *Is not only such a moral one as is between Husband and Wife, which is made by Love; or between King and Subjects, which is made by Laws; but such a natural Union as is between*
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128 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. III:

Head and Members, the Vine and Branches, which is made by one Spirit or Life dwelling in the whole. The Apostle says, 1 Cor. xii. 12, 13. *As the Body is one, and hath many Members; and also the Members of that one Body, being many, are one Body, so also is Christ; for by one Spirit are we all baptized into one Body.* Now see what Use the Apostle makes of both these, 1 Cor. vi. 15, 19, 20. *Know you not that your Bodies are the Members of Christ? Shall I then take the Members of Christ, and make them the Members of an Harlot? God forbid.* And then he thus proceeds in the 19th and 20th Verses; *What! Know you not that your Body is the Temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God; and ye are not your own, but ye are bought with a Price: Therefore glorify God in your Body and in your Spirit, which are God's.* What Helps and Incitements we have to the perfecting of Holiness in the Fear of God, from these two Doctrines, is inexpressible.

Lastly, *The Doctrine of the inconceivably great Reward, which shall be conferred upon all good and holy Persons, as the Gospel has revealed,* is such as could not possibly, by the mere Help of natural Light, enter into the Thoughts of those who were Strangers to it. We are therein assured not only of another Life; and that good Men shall therein be rewarded, but likewise that the Reward which shall be conferred upon them, shall be no less than an hyperbolically hyperbolic Weight of Glory; as are the Words of St. Paul, 2 Cor. iv. 17. Those
that

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Chap. I. *The Design of Christianity.* 129

that overcome, are promised that *they shall sit with Christ on his Throne, even as he overcame and is set down with his Father on his Throne*, Rev. iii. 21.

In short, the Happiness with which our Saviour will reward all his faithful Disciples, is so expressed, as that we are assured it is inexpressible, and likewise far exceeding the short Reach of our present Conceptions; of which their *Souls* are not only to partake, but their *Bodies* also, they being to be made (as *vile* as they are in this State) *like the glorious Body* ^a of Jesus Christ, and though sown in *Corruption* and *Dishonour*, to be raised in *Glory*, 1 Cor. xv.

Now though, as we said, many of the learned Heathens, by the Exercise of their Reason, made it probable to themselves that their Souls were immortal, and that in another World virtuous Persons shall be richly rewarded; yet no reasoning of theirs could ever enable them so much as to conjecture, that this Reward shall be such an *immensely* great one, as *that* the Gospel assures us of; there being a wonderful Disproportion betwixt the best Services that the most virtuous Persons are in a Possibility of performing, and such a Reward as this: And it being also impossible that so great a Felicity as that of the *Soul* only, should be a necessary, and natural Result from the highest Degrees of Holiness attainable in this low, and imperfect State. But yet it is too

^a Phil. iii. 21.

130 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. III.
 well known to be concealed, that the *Pythagoreans* and *Platonists* speak very great Things of the Happiness of Heaven; and those of them who discourse intelligibly concerning it, give in the general the Gospel Notion of it. I have found *Simplicius* somewhere, in his Comment on *Epicletus*, calling it an *eternal Rest with God*. And the *Pythagorean Verses* conclude with these two:

Ἦν δ' ἀπολείψας σῶμα ἐς αἰθέρ' ἐλεύθερον ἦλθης,
 Ἔσσιαι ἀθάνατοι· Θεὸς, ἄμβροτος ἔκ' ἔτε θνητός.

*If then this mortal Body thou forsake,
 And thy glad Flight to the pure Æther take,
 Among the Gods exalted thou shalt shine
 Immortal, incorruptible, divine.
 The Tyrant Death securely thou shalt brave,
 And scorn the dark Dominion of the Grave.*

N. ROWE'S Translation.

Where, by the *Greek Expression*, "*Thou shalt be an immortal God*," the Commentator *Hierocles* understands, thou shalt be like to the immortal Gods; and by them he means (as appears by his Comment upon the first Verse) those excellent Spirits, which are immediately subordinate to their Maker, the supreme God, and the *God of Gods*, as he calls him; by which he seems to understand the same with those called in the Scripture *Archangels*; for I find that he gives the Name *Angels* to an Order next below them. So that, accord-
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Chap. I. *The Design of Christianity.* 131

ing to him, it was the *Pythagorean Doctrine* That good Men shall, when they go to Heaven, be made in State, and Condition like to those that are likest to God Almighty. But how they should learn this, by mere natural Light, is unimaginable. That which is most probably conjectured, is, that they received these, with several other Notions, from the ancient Traditions of the *Hebrews*. But as for their σώμα ἀγιοειδές, and ὄχημα πνευματικόν, the *splendid Body*, and *spiritual Vehicle* they talk of, they mean not that glorious celestial Body, which the Apostle tells us this terrestrial one shall be changed into, but, a thin^b subtile Body, which they say the Soul, even while it is in this gross one, is immediately inclosed in; and which being in this Life well purified from the Pollution it hath contracted from its Case of Flesh, the Soul taking its Flight from thence with it, enjoyeth its Happiness in it. But, I say, the Change of this *vile* into a *glorious* Body, they were perfectly Strangers to.

Now what an unspeakable Encouragement to *Holiness* is the Happiness of which the Gospel proposes to us, and gives us *Affurance* also, that the now mentioned, or any of the Philosophers, could never, by the best Improvement of their Intellectuals, have conceived to be so much as

^b This Notion of a fine Body *Tertullian* retained his Belief of, after he was converted to Christianity, and took it for the *inner Man*, spoken of in Scripture.

132 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. III.

likely to be attainable by Mankind ! And who would still serve their filthy Lufts (and in so doing be the vilest of Slaves here) who look to reign with the King of the World for ever hereafter ? *He that hath this Hope in him, saith St. John, purifieth himself, even as he is pure, 1 John iii. 3.*

And what has been spoken of the Greatness of the *Reward* which is promised in the Gospel to obedient Persons, may be said also of the *Punishment* it threatens to the Disobedient. It would make (one would think) an Heart of Oak, and the most hardened Sinner to tremble, and shake at the reading of those Expressions by which it is set forth. Some of the Philosophers do speak very dreadful Things concerning the Condition of wicked Men in the other World; but they fall extremely short of what the Gospel has declared. But I confess, a Discourse on this Head will not very properly come in here. For mere Reason might make it exceedingly probable, that so highly aggravated Sins as those are which are committed against the Gospel, shall be punished as severely, if impenitently persisted in, as is declared by our Saviour and his Apostles they shall be. But however, it is no small Awakening to us Christians, that we have such an undoubted Assurance from God himself, what we must expect, if we will not be prevailed upon by all the Means afforded us for our Reformation, but shall notwithstanding persevere in the Neglect of
known

C H A P II.

That the Gospel contains far greater Helps for effecting the Design of making Men inwardly righteous, and truly holy, than God's most peculiar People, the Israelites, were favoured with. Where it is shewed, 1. That the Gospel is incomparably more effectual for this Purpose than the Moisaical Law was. 2. And that upon no other Accounts the Jews were in Circumstances for obtaining a thorough Reformation of Life, and Purification of Nature, like to those with which our Saviour has blessed his Disciples.

IN the second Place, it is the clearest Case, *That the Gospel of our Saviour contains far greater Helps and Advantages for effecting the great Work of making Men really righteous and truly holy, than God's most peculiar People, the Israelites, whom he knew, and favoured above all the Nations of the Earth, were Partakers of.*

134 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. III.

First, Nothing is plainer than that the Gospel is incomparably more effectual for this Purpose, than the *Mosaical Law* was: For indeed, that was *directly* designed only to restrain those who were under the Obligation of it from the more *notorious* Sins. *It was added* (says the Apostle) *because of Transgression, till the Seed should come, &c.* Gal. iii. 19. *Justin Martyr* declares particularly of the *Sacrifices*, that the End of them was to keep the Jews from worshipping Idols, which *Trypho* also, though a Jew who greatly gloried in the Law, acknowledged. They were an extremely carnal and vain People, exceedingly prone to be bewitched with the Superstitions of the Gentiles; God gave them therefore a pompous Way of Worship, that it might gratify their childish Humour, and so keep them from being drawn away with the Vanities of the Heathens among whom they dwelt: And he gave them, withal, such *Precepts*, enforced with Threatenings of most severe and present Punishments, as might by main Force hold them in from those vile Disorders, Immoralities and Exorbitances which had then overspread the Face of the woefully depraved, and corrupted World. It is certain that the Law of *Moses*, strictly so called, properly tended to make them no more than externally righteous; and whosoever was so, and did those Works it enjoined (which they might do by their own natural Strength) was esteemed according to that Law, and dealt with, as just and blameless; and had

Chap. II. *The Design of Christianity.* 135

had a Right to the Immunities and Privileges therein promised. But much less was it accompanied with Grace to endue the Observers of it with an inward Principle of Holiness.

And the Apostle St. *Paul* expresses this as the great Difference between that *Law* and the *Gospel*, in calling *this* the *Spirit*, and *that* the *Letter*, as he several Times does : Not that God, who was ever of an infinitely benign Nature, and *Love* itself (as St. *John* describes him) was wanting with his Grace to well-minded Men under the Old Testament; or that the Jews were all destitute of an inward Principle of Holiness; nothing less : But the Law of which *Moses* was peculiarly the Promulger, did not contain any Promises of Grace, nor did the Obligation of it extend any farther than to the outward Man. But there ran (as I may so express myself) a Vein of Gospel all along with this Law, which was contained in the Covenant made with *Abraham* and his Seed, by virtue of which the good Men among the Jews expected Justification and eternal Salvation, and performed the Substance of those Duties which the New Testament requires, and which were both by *Moses* and the Prophets, at certain Times, and upon several Occasions, urged upon them.

But as for this Law of *Moses*, considered according to its *natural* Meaning, it is called a *Law of a carnal Commandment*, Heb. vii. 16. And the Services it imposed, *weak and beggarly Elements*, Gal. iv. 9. And a *Law which made no*

136 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. III.

Man perfect, Heb. vii. 19. Its Promises, therefore, were only *temporal*; upon which Account the Author to the *Hebrews* says, that the Gospel is established *on better Promises*. Nor was Justification before God obtainable by it, as St. Paul frequently shews; and therefore, did account the Righteousness of it very mean and vile, in Comparison of that with which the Gospel endued Men. No Man could be acquitted by the severest Observance of this Law from any other than *Civil Punishments*, nor were its *Sacrifices* able to make the Offerers *perfect as pertaining to the Conscience*, Heb. ix. 9. And though it be true (as Mr. Chillingworth observes in his Sermon on Gal. v. 5.) *That the legal Sacrifices were very apt and commodious to shadow forth the Oblation and Satisfaction of Christ*; yet this Use of them was so mystical and reserved, so impossible to be collected out of the Letter of the Law, that without a special Revelation from God, the Eyes of the Israelites were too weak to serve them, to pierce through those dark Clouds and Shadows, and to carry their Observation to the Substance. So that (proceeds he) I conceive those Sacrifices of the Law, in this Respect, are a great deal more beneficial to us Christians: For there is a great Difference between Sacraments and Types: Types are only useful after the Antitype is discovered, for the Confirmation of their Faith that follow. As for Example, Abraham's Offering of Isaac by Faith, did lively represent the real Oblation of Christ; but in that Respect was of little or no Use till Christ was indeed crucified; it being

Chap. II. *The Design of Christianity.* 137

being impossible to make that History a Ground-work of their Faith in Christ. The like may be said of the legal Sacrifices.

And for a clear Understanding of the direct Use of this Law, I refer the Reader to that Sermon: Where it is fully, and (in my Opinion) as judiciously discoursed as I have ever met with it.

Secondly, Nor were these special Favourites of Heaven, upon any other Accounts, in Circumstances for the obtaining of a thorough Reformation of Life, Renovation and Purification of Nature, comparable to those with which our Saviour has blessed his Disciples. For though they had, (as we said) for the Substance, the same *spiritual Precepts* which are enjoined in the Gospel, over and above the *Mosaical Law*; yet these were enforced by no *express* Promises of eternal Happiness, or Threatenings of eternal Misery: Nor was so much as a *Life to come* discovered to them otherwise than by Tradition, or by certain ambiguous Expressions (for the most Part) of their inspired Men, or by such Sayings as only implied it, and from which it might be rationally concluded. As for Instance, in that Place particularly, where God by his Representative, an Angel, declared himself to his Servant *Moses* to be *the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob*^a; from whence our Saviour inferred that Doctrine, for this Reason, that *God is not the God of the Dead, but*

^a Exod. iii. 6.

138 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. III.
of the Living^b. And that the Notices they had
hereof were not very plain and clear, is apparent,
as there was a Sect among them, viz. the *Sad-*
duces, who professed to disbelieve it; and yet,
notwithstanding, were continued in the Body, and
enjoyed the Privileges of the Jewish Church.
But that one fore-cited Assertion of the Apostle,
2 *Tim.* i. 10. puts this out of all Question, viz.
that Christ hath brought Life and Immortality to
Light through the Gospel. From whence we may
assuredly gather thus much at least, viz. That in
the Gospel is manifestly revealed Life and Immor-
tality, which was never before made known so
certainly.

I add moreover, that the *Israelites* were re-
quired to keep at such a Distance from all other
Nations, that they could not but be by that
Means greatly inclined to Morosity, Self-conceit-
edness, and Contempt of their Fellow-creatures;
and were ever and anon employed in such Ser-
vices as naturally tended, through the Weakness
of their Natures, to make their Spirits too angry
and fierce, not to say *cruel*. As for Instance,
that of destroying God's Enemies and their own,
nay, sometimes the innocent Children too, and
the Cattle that belonged to them. And several
Connivances and Indulgencies they had (as in the
Cases of Divorce, and Polygamy, and Revenge)
which not a little conduced to the gratifying of

^b Matt. xxii. 32.

Chap. II. *The Design of Christianity.* 139

Sensuality, and the animal Life; all which are taken away by our Saviour Christ. These Things, with divers others, made it in an *ordinary Way* impossible for those People to arrive at that Height of Virtue and true Goodness, to which the Gospel designs to raise us. And though we find some of them very highly commended for their great Sanctity, we are to understand those *Encomiums* for the *most Part*, at least, with a Reference to the Dispensation under which they were; and as implying a Consideration of the Circumstances they were in, and the Means they enjoyed.

And thus have we shewed what a most admirably-effectual Course our blessed Saviour has taken *to purify us from all Filthiness both of the Flesh and Spirit*, and to make us in all Respects righteous, and holy: And how much the Christian Dispensation excels others as to its Aptness for this Purpose. And from what has been said we may safely conclude, that neither the World, nor any Part of it, was ever favoured by God with Means for the Accomplishment of this Work, comparable to those which are contained in the Christian Religion.

So that well might St. Paul call the Gospel of Christ *the Power of God to Salvation* ^c, that is, both from Misery and the Cause of it. Well may the Weapons of the Christian Warfare be

^c Rom. i. 16.

140 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. III.

said not to be carnal and weak, but mighty through God, to the pulling down of strong Holds, and casting down Imaginations and every high Thing that exalteth itself against the Knowledge of God, and bringing into Captivity every Thought to the Obedience of Christ ^d. Great Reason had Clemens Alexandrinus to call our Saviour ἀνδραγόνητος παιδαγωγός, the Instructor and School-master of human Nature ^e; and to say (as he does in the following Words,) That he has endeavoured to save us, by using with all his Might, all the Instruments of Wisdom (or all wise Courses) and draws us back by many Bridles, from gratifying unreasonable Appetites. And Justin Martyr, speaking of the Gospel, had Cause pathetically to break out as he did, in these Words, ὦ παῖς διωγὼν φρονημάτων, &c. O thou Expeller and Chaser away of evil Affections! O thou Extinguisher of burning Lusts! This is that which makes us not Poets or Philosophers, or excellent Orators, but of poor mortal Men makes us like so many immortal Gods, and translateth us from this low Earth to those Regions that are above Olympus ^f. And well, again, might the same good Father, having thoroughly acquainted himself with the Stoick and Platonick Philosophy, (by which latter he thought himself to have gained much Wisdom) and at last, by the Advice of an old Man, a Stranger, having studied the Gospel, thus express himself, ταύτην μόνην φιλο-

^d 2 Cor. x. 5.

^e *Pædag.* pag. 120.

^f *Oratio ad Græcos*, pag. 40.

Chap. III. *The Design of Christianity.* 141

σοφίαν εὕρισκον ἀσφαλὴ καὶ σύμφερον, &c. *I found this alone to be the safe and profitable Philosophy, and thus and by this Means became I a Philosopher &c.*

Simplicius saith thus of *Epietetus* his *Enchiridion*^h, That it hath πολλὴ τὸ δραστικόν καὶ κινήτικόν *so much of Powerfulness and Pungency*, that those which are not perfectly dead, must needs come to understand thereby their own Affections, and be effectually excited to the rectifying of them. Could HE give such a Character, as *this*, of that little Book of his Brother-Heathen! What can be invented by Us high enough for the Gospelⁱ?

C H A P. III.

An Objection against the wonderful Efficacy of the Christian Religion for the Purpose of making Men holy, taken from the very little Success it has herein, together with the prodigious Wickedness of Christendom. An Answer given to it in three Particulars, viz. 1. That how ill soever its Success is, it is evident from the foregoing

^g *Dialog. cum Tryph. pag. 225.*

^h *Pag. 2.*

ⁱ The *Enchiridion*, though a very fine Thing, is certainly, in Comparison with the Scriptures, extremely weak and insufficient for the Purposes for which *Simplicius* praises it.

Discourse,

Discourse, that it is not to be imputed to any Weakness, or Inefficacy in that Religion. The true Causes thereof assigned. 2. That it is to be expected that those should be the worse for the Gospel, who will not be bettered by it. 3. That there was a Time when the Gospel's Success was greatly answerable to what has been said of its Efficacy: And that the Primitive Christians were People of most unblameable and holy Lives. The Gnosticks improperly called Christians in any Sense. The Primitive Christians proved to be Men of excellent Lives, by the Testimonies of Fathers contained in their Apologies for them to their Enemies; and by the Acknowledgments of their Enemies themselves. An Account given in particular of their meek and submissive Temper, out of Tertullian.

IF it be now objected against what we have said of the admirable Efficacy of the Christian Religion, for the Purpose of making Men holy, that there is but very little Sign of it in the Lives of those who profess to believe it: For who are more woefully lost as to all true Goodness, who are more deeply sunk into Sensuality and Brutishness, than the Generality of Christians? Nay,

Chap. III. *The Design of Christianity.* 143

among what Sort of Men are all Manner of abominable Wickednesses and Villanies to be found to rise, so much as among them? Upon which Account the Name of *Christian* stinks in the Nostrils of the very *Jews, Turks and Pagans.* Beastly Intemperance, and Uncleanesses of all Sorts; the most sordid Covetousness; wretched Injustice; Oppressions, and Cruelties: the most devilish Malice, Envy and Pride; the deadliest Animosities; the most outrageous Feuds, Dissentions and Rebellions; the plainest and grossest Idolatry; highest Blasphemies, and most horrid Impieties of all Kinds, are in no Part of the World more observable than they are in Christendom; nor most of them any where so observable. And even in those Places where the Gospel is most truly and powerfully preached; and particularly in this our Nation, there is but little more to be taken Notice of in the far greater Number, than the *Name of Christians*; nor any more of Religion than insignificant Complimentings of God, and a mere bodily Worship of him. But what abominable Vice is there, that does not here abound? Nay, where does the *highest* and most daring of Impieties, *viz. Atheism* itself, so boldly shew its Head as here? And as for those among us who make the greatest Pretences to Christianity, besides a higher Profession, a more frequent Attendance on Ordinances, and a mighty Zeal for certain fruitless Opinions they have taken up, and little Trifles which signify nothing to
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144. *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. III.

the bettering of their Souls, and carrying on that which we have shewed is the DESIGN OF CHRISTIANITY; there is little to be observed in very many, if not most, of them; whereby they may be distinguished from other People. But as for the Sins of Covetousness; Pride and Contempt of others; Disobedience to Authority; Sedition, Unpeaceableness; Wrath and Fierceness against those who differ in Opinion from them; Censoriousness and Uncharitableness; it is too obvious how much the greater Part of the Sects into which we are divided, are guilty of *most*, if not *all* of them. And that which is really *the Power of Godliness* appears in the Conversations of but very few.

God knows, the Wickedness of those who *enjoy* and profess to believe the Gospel, is an extremely fertile and copious Theme to dilate upon; and is fitter to be the Subject of a great Volume (if any one can persuade himself so far to rake into such a noisome Dunghil, as sure none can, except Enemies to Christianity) than to be discoursed by the Bye, as it is here. Nor can there be any easier Task undertaken than to shew, that not a few mere *Heathens* have behaved themselves incomparably better towards God, their Neighbour, and themselves, than the Generality of those who are called *Christians*. Nay, I fear it would not be over-difficult to make it appear, that the Generality of those who never heard the Gospel, behave

behave themselves in several Respects *better* than they do.

But I have no Inclination to entertain myself, or Reader, with such an unpleasant and melancholy Argument, but will endeavour to answer the sad Objection which is from thence taken against the Truth of my last Discourse.

I. And, in the first Place, let the Gospel have never so little Success in promoting what is *designed* by it; whoever considers it, and what has been said concerning it, cannot but acknowledge that it is in *itself* as fit as any thing that can be imagined for the Purpose of thoroughly reforming the *Lives*, and purifying the *Natures* of Mankind: And also incomparably more fit than any other Course that has ever been taken, or can be thought of. So that we may certainly conclude, that the Depravation of Christendom is not to be ascribed to the Inefficacy of the Gospel, but to other Causes; namely, Mens Unbelief of the Truth of it; as much as they *profess* Faith in it; their inexcusable Neglect of considering the infinitely powerful Motives to a holy Life contained in it; and of using the Means conducing thereunto prescribed by it. And these are inseparable Concomitants, and most effectual Promoters of each other. Every Man's Inconsideration is proportionable to his Incredulity, and his Incredulity to his Inconsideration: And how much of Carelessness is visible in Mens Lives, so much of Unbelief possesses their Hearts; and so on the contrary.

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Upon

146 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. III.

Upon which Account *to believe* and *to be obedient*, and *not to believe* and *to be disobedient*, are synonymous Phrases, and of the same Signification in the New, and likewise in the Old Testament. Now it is a true Saying of *Tertullian*, *Pervicaciæ nullum opposuit remedium Deus*, God hath provided no Remedy (that is, no ordinary one) against Wilfulness. And though the Gospel has such a Tendency as has been shewn, to work the most excellent Effects in Men, yet it operates not as *Charms*, nor will it have Success upon any without their own Concurrence, and Co-operation with it. The excellent *Rules of Life* laid down in the Gospel, must necessarily signify nothing to those, who only *hear*, or *read* them, but will not *mind* them. Its *Promises*, or *Threatenings* can be exciting to none, who will not *believe* or *consider* them: Nor can the Arguments it affords to provoke to assent, be convincing to any but those who impartially weigh them; its Helps and Assistances will do *no* good, where they are totally neglected. And though there be preventing as well as assisting Grace going along with the Gospel, for the effectual prevailing on Mens Wills to use their utmost Endeavour to subdue their Lusts, and to acquire virtuous Habits, yet this Grace is not such as that there is no Possibility of refusing or quenching it. Nor is it fit it should, seeing Mankind is endued with a Principle of Freedom; and that this Principle is essential to the human Nature.

I will

Chap. III. *The Design of Christianity.* 147

I will add, that this is one immediate Cause of the Unsuccessfulness of the Gospel, to which it is very much to be attributed; namely, Mens strange and unaccountable mistaking the DESIGN of it. Multitudes of those that profess Christianity are so grossly inconsiderate, not to say worse, as to conceive no better of it than as a *Science* and *Matter of Speculation*: And take themselves, (though against the clearest Evidences of the contrary imaginable) for true and genuine Christians, either because they have a general Belief of the Truth of the Christian Religion, and profess themselves the Disciples of Christ Jesus, in Contradistinction from *Jews*, *Mahometans*, and *Pagans*; and in and through him alone expect Salvation: Or because they have so far acquainted themselves with the Doctrine of the Gospel, as to be able to talk and dispute, and to make themselves pass for *knowing People*: Or because they have joined themselves to that Party of Christians which they presume are of the purest and most reformed Model, and are zealous Sticklers for their peculiar Forms, and distinguishing Sentiments; and as stiff Opposers of all other which are contrary to them. Now the Gospel must necessarily be as ineffectual to the rectifying of such Mens Minds, and Reformation of their Manners, while they have so wretchedly low an Opinion of its DESIGN, as if it really had no better: And so long as they take it for granted its main Intention is διδάξει, & βελτιώσαι, to make them orthodox, not virtuous, it cannot

be thought that they should be ever the more holy, nay, 'tis a thousand to one but they will be in one kind or other, the more unholy for their Christianity.

And, Lastly, There are several untoward Opinions very unhappily instilled into Professors of Christianity, of which render the Truths of the Gospel they retain a Belief, insignificant and unsuccessful as to the bettering either of their Hearts or Lives, as infinitely apt, and of as mighty Efficacy as they are in themselves for those great Purposes.

2. Secondly, Whereas it was said also, that the Generality of Heathens live in divers Respects better Lives, than Multitudes, and even the Generality of those who profess Christianity; it is so far from being difficult to give a satisfactory Account how this may be without disparaging our excellent Religion; that it is to be expected that those People should be even much the *worse* for it, who refuse to be *bettered* by it. It is an old Maxim, that *Corruptio optimi est pessima*; the *best* Things being spoiled, prove to be the very worst: And accordingly, nothing less is to be looked for, than that degenerate Christians should be the vilest of all Persons. And it is also certain, that the best Things, when abused, ordinarily serve to the worst Purposes; of which there may be given innumerable Instances: And so it is, in this present Case. St. Paul told the *Corinthians*, that he, and the

Chap. III. *The Design of Christianity.* 149

the other Apostles, were *a Saviour of Death unto Death*, as well as *of Life unto Life* *. And our Saviour gave the *Pharisees* to understand, that *for Judgment he was come into the World*; that *those that see not, might see*; and that *those that see, might be made blind* ¹; that is, that it would be a certain Consequent of his Coming, not only that poor ignorant Creatures should be turned from Darkness to Light, but also that those which have the Light, and shut their Eyes against it, should be judicially blinded. And the forementioned Apostle, in the first Chapter of his Epistle to the *Romans*, says of those that *held the Truth in Unrighteousness*, that would not suffer it to have any good Effect upon them, through their close adhering to their filthy Lusts, that *God gave them up to the most unnatural Villanies*, permitted them to commit them by with-holding all Restraints from them; and likewise *gave them over* εις την ανομιαν, *to a reprobate Mind*. So that, from the just Judgment of God it is, I say, to be expected, that depraved Christians should be the most wicked of all People: And therefore, it is so far from being Matter of Wonder, that those who will not be converted by the Gospel, should be so many of them very horribly profane; that it is rather so, that all those which, having for any considerable Time lived under the preaching of it, continue disobedient to it, should not be such. In the purest Ages of the

* 2 Cor. ii. 16.

¹ John ix. 39.

Church, were degenerated Christians made in this kind most fearful Examples of the Divine Vengeance; and so utterly forsaken of God, that they became, (if we may believe *Irenæus*, *Tertullian*, and others of the ancient Fathers) not one whit better than incarnate Devils. Nor were there to be found in the whole World, in those Days, and but rarely since, such abominable and most execrable Wretches as they were. I have sometimes admired that human Nature should be capable of such a monstrous Depravation, as several Stories recorded of them speak them to have contracted: But,

3. Thirdly, If we must needs judge of the Efficacy of the Gospel for the making Men holy, by its Success herein; let us cast our Eyes back upon the *first Ages of Christianity*, and then we shall find it an easy Matter to satisfy ourselves concerning it, though we should understand no more of Christianity, than the Effects it produced in those Days.

For though there were then a sort of People who sometimes called themselves *Christians*; who were (as was now said) the most desperately wicked Creatures that ever the Earth bare; yet these were esteemed by all others that were known by that Name as no whit more of *their* Number, than the *Pagans* and *Jews* that defied Christ. And their Religion was a motley thing that consisted of *Christianity*, *Judaism* and *Paganism* all blended together; and therefore in regard of their mere Profession

Chap. III. *The Design of Christianity.* 151

feſſion they could be no more truly called *Chriſtians* than *Jews* or *Pagans*. Or rather (to ſpeak properly) they were of no Religion at all, but would ſometimes comply with the *Jews*, and at other times with the *Heathens*, and joined readily with both in perſecuting the *Chriſtians*: And, in ſhort, the *Samaritans* might with leſs Impropriety be called *Jews*, than theſe *Gnoſticks*, *Chriſtians*:

'Tis alſo confeſſed that the orthodox *Chriſtians* were calumniated by the *Heathens* as flat *Atheiſts*, but their only Pretence for ſo doing was their reſuſing to worſhip *their* Gods. And they likewiſe accuſed them of the moſt beaſtly and moſt horrid Practices; but it is ſufficiently evident that they were beholden to the *Gnoſticks* for thoſe Accuſations; who, being accounted *Chriſtians*, and being notoriously guilty of ſuch Practices, gave occaſion to the Enemies of *Chriſtianity* to reproach all the Profeſſors of it, as moſt filthy and impure Creatures. I know it is commonly ſaid, that thoſe Calumnies proceeded purely from the malicious Invention of their Enemies; but it is apparent that thoſe vile Hereticks themſelves gave occaſion to them. But that the *Chriſtians* were ſo far from being guilty of ſuch monſtrous Crimes, that they did lead moſt inoffenſive and good Lives, abundantly appear by the Apologies which divers of the Fathers made to the *Heathen Emperors* and People in their behalf. *Juſtin Martyr*, in his Apology to *Antoninus Pius*, has this Saying, *ἡμεῖς οὐκ ἐπὶ τῷ ἑαυτοῦ, &c.* It is our Intereſt that all Perſons

152 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. III.

should make a narrow Inquisition into our Lives and Doctrine, and to expose them to the View of every one. And he afterwards tells that Emperor, That his People had nothing to lay to their Charge truly, but their bare Name, Christians. And again, That they which in times past took Pleasure in unclean Practices, do live now (that they are become Converts to Christianity) pure and chaste Lives: They which used magical Arts, do now consecrate and devote themselves to the eternal and good God: They which preferred their Money and Possessions before all things else, now cast them into the common Stock; and communicate them to any that stand in need: They which once hated each other, and mutually engaged in bloody Battles, and (according to the Custom) would not keep a common Fire, πρὸς τὰς ἐκ ὁμοφύλων, with those that were not of the same Tribe, now live lovingly, and familiarly together: That now they pray for their very Enemies; and those which persecute them with unjust Hatred they endeavour to win to them by Persuasions, that they also, living according to the honest Precepts of Christ, may have the same Hope, and gain the same Reward with themselves from the great Governour and Lord of the World.

Athenagoras, in his Apology, says thus to the Emperors Aurelius Antoninus and Aurelius Commodus: As very gracious and benign as you are to all others, you have no Care of us who are called Christians; for you suffer us who commit no Evil, nay, who (as shall hereafter appear) behave ourselves of
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Chap. III. *The Design of Christianity.* 153

all Men most piously and justly both towards God and your Government, to be vexed, to be put to Flight from Place to Place, and to be violently dealt with. And then he adds some Lines after, If any of you can convict us of any great or small Crime, we are ready to bear the most severe Punishment which can be inflicted upon us. And speaking of the Calumnies that some had fastened upon them, he saith, If you can find that these things are true, spare no Age, no Sex; but utterly root us up and destroy us, with our Wives and Children, if you can prove that any of us live like to Beasts, &c.

And there is very much to the same Purpose in Tertullian's Apology; where he tells the Roman Governours, *That they dealt otherwise with the Christians, than with any other whom they accounted Malefactors: For whereas they tortured others to make them confess the Faults of which they were accused, they tortured these to make them deny themselves to be Christians: And that having no Crime besides to lay to their Charge which carried the least Shew of Truth, their professing themselves to be no Christians would at any time procure for them their Absolution.* And to this Objection, that there are some Christians who *excedere à regula disciplinæ*, depart from the Rules of their Religion, and live disorderly; he returneth this Answer, *Desinunt tamen Christiani haberi penes nos: But those that do so, are no longer by us accounted Christians.* And, by the way, let me recite Rigaltius his short Note upon this Passage, *At perseverant*

severant hodie in nomine & numero Christianorum, qui vitam omnem vivunt Antichristi : But those now-a-days do retain the Name and Society of Christians, which live altogether antichristian Lives. And (proceeds he) Tolle publicanos, &c. Take away Publicans and a wretched Rabble which he musters together, & frigeunt hodiernorum Ecclesiarum Christianorum ; and our present Christian Churches will be lamentably weak, small, and insignificant things.

From these few Citations out of the Apologies of the forementioned Fathers, to which may be added Abundance more of the same Nature, both out of them and others, we may judge what rare Success the Gospel had in the *first Ages*, and what a vast Difference there is between the Christians of *those*, and of *these* Days ; that is, between the Christians who were under Persecution, and those who since have lived in Ease and Prosperity. When the Christian Religion came to be the Religion of Nations, and to be owned and encouraged by Emperors and Rulers, then was the whole vast *Roman Empire* quickly persuaded to march under its Banner ; and the very worst of Men, for *Fashion-sake*, and in Expectation of *temporal Advantages*, came flocking into the Church of Christ. Nay, the *worse* Men were, and the less of Conscience they had, the more forward might they *then* be so to do, the more haste they might make to renounce their former Religion, and take upon them the Profession of Christianity.

And

Chap. III. *The Design of Christianity.* 155

And no sooner was the Church set in the warm Sun-shine of worldly Riches and Honours, but it is apparent she was insensibly over-run with those noisome Vermin, which have bred and multiplied ever since, even for many Centuries of Years.

If any shall doubt whether the forementioned Fathers might not give too good a Character of the Christians whose Cause they pleaded; I desire them to consider whether this be imaginable, seeing their Enemies, to whom they wrote their Defence of them, could easily, they living among them, have discovered the Falsity of their Commendations. And we find them frequently appealing to the Heathens own Consciences, whether they themselves did not believe that true which they said of them: And moreover we have them ever and anon triumphing over them, and provoking them to shew such Effects of their *Philosophy* and *Way of Religion*, as they themselves could witness were produced by the *Gospel* of Christ.

Nay, and we have their Adversaries themselves giving them a very high Character. *Tertullian* in his forementioned Apology says, that *Pliny* the second (who was a Persecutor of Christians) wrote thus to the Emperor *Trajan* from the Province where he ruled under him, viz. ^m *That,*
Besides

^m *Præter obstinationem non sacrificandi, nihil aliud se de sacramentis eorum comperisse, quàm cætus antelucanos ad canendum Christo & Deo, & ad confæderandam Disciplinam;*

156 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. III.

Besides their resolute refusing to offer Sacrifice, he could learn nothing concerning their Religion, but that they held Meetings before Day to sing Praises to Christ and God, and to engage their Sect in solemn Leagues; forbidding Murther, Adultery, Deceit, Disloyalty, and all other Wickednesses.

And in a now extant Epistle of his to that Emperor, we find him giving this Information, viz.
ⁿ That, some that had renounced Christianity, and now worshiped his Image, and the Statues of their Gods, and cursed Christ, did affirm, ° *That this was the greatest Fault or Error they were guilty of, that they were wont, upon a set Day, to assemble together before it was light, and to sing a Hymn to Christ as to a God; and to bind themselves by a Sacrament, not to any Wickedness, but that they would not commit Thefts, Robberies, Adulteries; that they would not be worse than their Words; that they would not deny any thing intrusted in their Hands when demanded of them: which done, it was their Custom to depart, and to meet again, ad capiendum cibum promiscuum, tamen & innoxium, to eat a*

plinam: homicidium, adulterium, fraudem, perfidiam & cætera scelera prohibentes.

ⁿ Plinii, Lib. 10. Epist. 97. Edit. ult.

² *Affirmabant autem, hanc fuisse summam vel culpæ suæ, vel erroris, quod essent soliti stato die ante lucem convenire; carmenque Christo, quasi Deo, dicere secum invicem, seque Sacramento non in scelus aliquod obstringere, sed ne furta, ne latrocinia, ne adulteria committerent, ne fidem fallerent, ne depositum appellati abnegarent, &c.*

common

Chap. III. *The Design of Christianity.* 157

common but innocent and harmless Meal, which was doubtless the *Agape* or *Feast of Charity*, which was in the primitive Times in use among the Christians, after the Celebration of the Lord's Supper. This was an excellent Account of them, and much too good to be expected from Apostates, such having been ordinarily observed to be of all others, the most deadly Enemies of Christianity, and the Professors of it.

But to return to our Author; he a few Lines after adds, that he put two Maid-servants upon the Rack, to extort from them as full a Discovery as he could of the Christians Crimes; ^p *but he could not find any they were guilty of, except obstinate and excessive Superstition.* So he called their constant Perseverance, and Diligence, in observing the Precepts of their most excellent Religion.

And the Emperor *Antoninus Pius*, as much an Enemy of Christians as he was, writes thus in an Epistle to the People of *Asia*, (which is to be seen in *Justin Martyr* ^q, and affixed to the Apology he directed to him) viz. *That they could make no Proof of the Crimes they laid to the Christians Charge, and that they overcame them by chusing to lay down their Lives rather than to do the things they required of them: And that he thought it fit to advertise them, that the Christians, when Earthquakes happened,*

^p — *Sed nihil aliud inveni, quàm Superstitionem pravam & immodicam.*

^q *Justin. Martyr. Apolog. ad Antoninum Pium.*

158 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. III.

were not under such dreadful Fears as they were ;
 and that they were *εὐπαρεσβασότεροι πρὸς τὸν Θεόν*,
 endued with a firmer Confidence and Trust in God.
 And there next followeth another Epistle of the
 Emperor *Antoninus Philosophus* to the Senate and
 People of *Rome* ; wherein he gave them an Ac-
 count of an imminent Danger that he and his
 Army were in, in the Heart of *Germany*, by the
 sudden Approach of nine hundred and seventy
 thousand Barbarians and Enemies : And how that
 finding his Strength to oppose them very small,
 he commanded all those to appear before him
 who were called *Christians*, (as suspecting, 'tis
 like, either their Fidelity or Courage) and per-
 ceiving there were a great Number of them, very
 sharply inveighed against them : *Which* (saith he)
I ought not to have done in regard of the Virtue
which I after found to be in them ; whereby they
began the Fight not with Darts and Weapons, and
Sound of Trumpets, &c. Wherefore (proceeds he)
it is meet that we should know, that those whom we
suspect for Atheists, Θεὸν ἔχον αὐτόματον ἐν τῇ συνει-
δήσει τετυχημένον, have God willingly inclosed, or
 of his own Accord inhabiting, in their Consci-
 ence : For laying themselves flat upon the Earth,
 they prayed not only for me, but also for my whole
 Army, which was then present, that they might be a
 Means of Solace and Comfort to us, in our present
 Hunger and Thirst, (for we could not come by any
 Water for five Days together :) But as soon as they
 were prostrate upon the Ground, and prayed to a
 God

Chap. III. *The Design of Christianity.* 159

God whom I knew not, immediately there fell Rain from Heaven, upon us, very cool and refreshing, but upon our Adversaries χάλασα πυρώδης, a fiery Hail-storm: And their Prayer was instantly accompanied with the Presence of God, as of one invincible and insuperable. Therefore let us permit these People to be Christians, lest they praying to have the like Weapons employed against us, they should obtain their Desire. And a few Lines after, the Emperor declared it his Will and Pleasure, That *whosoever* accuseth a Christian as such, for the time to come, he shall be burnt alive.

What better Satisfaction can we desire, concerning the Truth of the forementioned Father's Account of the Christians that lived in their Days, than that which the Pens of these their Enemies have given to us?

There is one thing more I will add concerning the primitive Christians, viz. That the most calm, meek, peaceable, gentle, and submissive Temper recommended in the Gospel, mightily discovered itself in them: And thereby we may judge what kind of People they were as to the other Parts of Christianity; it being impossible that such an excellent Spirit should be alone, and unaccompanied with the other Virtues. Though they were for the most Part very sorely persecuted, yet, as *Tertullian* says (in his Book *ad Nationes*) *Nunquam conjuratio erupit*, there was never any Uproar or hurly-burly among them. And having, in his Apology, ask'd the two Emperors,
and

160 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. III.

and the rest, this Question, *If we are commanded to love our Enemies, whom have we then to hate?* He thus proceeds: *How often do you yourselves rage against the Christians who are obedient unto you, and moreover suffer them to be stoned and burnt by the rout of common People; but yet what Revenge did ye ever observe them repaying for the Injuries done unto them, as stout-hearted as they are even to Death itself?*

If it be objected (as it is by some) that this might be attributed not to their good Temper, but to mere Necessity, seeing they knew themselves too weak to succeed in any rebellious or violent Attempt: Let the same *Tertullian* give an Answer; and he does it in the very next Words. *In one Night* (says he) *with a few Firebrands, they could revenge themselves sufficiently upon you, if they thought it lawful to render evil for evil.* Nay, and not only so, but he tells them plainly, that they were in Circumstances to manage the Parts of *hostes exerti*, open Enemies against them, as well as of *vindices occulti*, sly and secret Revengers; and that they could raise an Army, if it pleased them, numerous and powerful enough to cope with them; and withal he thus proceeds: *Hesterni sumus, & vestra omnia implevimus, &c.* Though we are but as it were of Yesterday, yet you have no Place but is full of us; your Cities, your Islands, Castles, Towns, Council-houses; your Fortresses, Tribes, Bands of Soldiers, Palace, Senate, Court, *Sola vobis relinquimus templa, Your*
Temples

Chap. III. *The Design of Christianity.* 161

Temples only are empty of us. And he goes on, Cui bello non idonei, &c. What Battles are not we able to wage with you, who are so willingly slain by you? but according to the Laws of our Religion we esteem it better to be killed than to kill. Nay, he next tells them, potuimus inermes nec rebelles, &c. We need not take arms and rebel to revenge ourselves upon you, for we are so great a Part of the Empire, that by but departing from you, we should utterly destroy it, and affright you with your own Solitude, and leave you more Enemies than loyal Subjects. And so far were they from making use of the Advantages they had to deliver themselves by the Way of Violence, that (as not long after he saith to them) they prayed for the Emperors, and those in Authority under them, for Peace and a quiet State of Affairs among them: and (as somewhere he adds) very ready also to give them Assistance against their Enemies.

Origin also tells Celsus^r, that he or any of his Party were able to shew εἰς τὴν αἰτίαν ἡγών, nothing of Sedition, that the Christians were every guilty of: and yet, what Tertullian said of the Roman Empire in general, this Father elsewhere in the same Book speaks of Greece and Barbary, viz. That the Gospel had subdued all that Country and the greater Part of this, and had brought over to Godliness Souls innumerable.

162 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. III.

Thus you see how far the primitive Christians were from the tumultuous, fiery, and boisterous Spirit, with which Christendom above all other Parts of the World has been since infested. And thus we have shewn that there was once a Time (God grant that the like may be again) when the Success of the Christian Religion in conquering Mens Lusts, and rectifying their Natures, was greatly answerable to the Efficacy that it has for this Purpose. And so we pass to the second Inference.

C H A P. IV.

The Second Inference.

That we understand from what has been said of the Design of Christianity, how fearfully it is abused by those who call themselves the Roman Catholicks. That the Church of Rome has by several of her Doctrines enervated all the Precepts and Motives to Holiness contained in the Gospel. That she has rendered the Means therein prescribed, for the Attainment thereof, extremely ineffectual. That she has also as greatly corrupted them.

Chap. IV. *The Design of Christianity.* 163

vers Instances of the Papists Idolatry. Their Image Worship one Instance. Their praying to Saints departed another. Other Impieties accompanying it, mentioned. Some Account of their Blasphemies, particularly in their Prayers to the Blessed Virgin. Their worshipping the Host the third, and grossest Instance of their Idolatry. Some other of their wicked and most anti-christian Doctrines.

SEcondly, By what has been said concerning the *Design of the Christian Religion*, we easily understand how fearfully it is abused by those who call themselves the *Roman Catholicks*. Nor need we any other Argument to prove *Popery* to be nothing less than *Christianity* besides this, *viz.* That the GRAND DESIGN of *this*, is to make us HOLY; and also aims at the raising of us to the most *elevated* Pitch of Holiness, and is admirably contrived for that Purpose: but the Religion of the *Papists*, as such, most apparently tends to carry on a Design most opposite: to serve a carnal and corrupt Interest; to give Men Security in a way of sinning; and pretends to teach them a way to do, at one and the same time effectually, the most contrary, and inconsistent things. That is, to *deprave their Natures*, and *save their Souls*; and even in gratifying their wicked Inclinations to lay a firm Foundation for eternal Happiness.

164 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. III.

So that, if *this* (as they pretend *it alone* is) be the Christian Religion, we must needs ingenuously acknowledge, that what we said in the Introduction was charged upon it by *Celsus* and *Julian* is no Calumny, but an Accusation most just and well deserved. For as the *Church of Rome* hath rendered divers excellent *Precepts* of Holiness very ineffectual, by making them *Counsels* only, not *Commands*; and also not a few of its *Prohibitions* unnecessary, by her Distinction of Sins into *Mortal* and *Venial*; understanding by *venial* Sins such as for the sake of which no Man can deserve to lose the Divine Favour; and therefore making them really no Sins: so hath she enervated all the *Evangelical Commandments*, both *positive* and *negative*, and made them insignificant by a great many Doctrines that are taught by her most darling Sons, and decreed or allowed by herself. That one Popish Doctrine of the *Non-necessity of Repentance before the imminent Point of Death*; and that (though the Church requireth it upon Holidays, yet) no Man is bound by the Divine Law to it until that Time, is of itself, without the Help of any other, sufficient to take away the Force of all the holy *Precepts* of our Saviour, and to make them utterly unsuccessful to the Embracers of it: and this other goeth beyond *that* in Aptness for this Purpose, *viz.* That mere *Attrition*, or Sorrow for Sin for Fear of Damnation, if it be accompanied with Confession to the Priest, is sufficient for Salvation. For, as the former makes a *Death-bed*

Chap. IV. *The Design of Christianity.* 165

bed Repentance only necessary, so this latter makes that Repentance alone so, which is far from deserving to be so called, and which wants the principal Ingredients of that Grace, *viz. Hatred of Sin, and Love to God and Goodness*; and consequently works no *Change* in the *Nature* of the Sinner, nor makes him Partaker in the least Measure of true Holiness.

The *Threats of Hell* have they made a mere Scare-crow by their Doctrine of *Purgatory*; and the Fear of *this* too have they taken a notable Course to secure Men from by that of *Penances*, and the *Indulgences* granted by their Popes very ordinarily for doing certain odd Trifles and idle Things; but which by Money can never fail to be procured. Nor are the most *horrid Impieties* shut out from having their Share in his Holiness his *Indulgences*; as more than sufficiently appears by the *Tax of the Apostolical Chancery*; whereto those that will pay the Price, Absolutions are to be had for the most *abominable* and not to be named Villainies, nay, and *Licences* also, for not a few Wickednesses.

I may add to the forementioned, their Doctrine of the meritorious *Supererogations* of the Saints, which, being applied to others, they teach to be available for their Pardon; which besides its most impious making many Co-saviours with *Jesus Christ*, infinitely encourages to Carelessness, and loose living.

166 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. III.

The Religion of the *Means* prescribed in the Gospel, have they done what lay in them to make both extremely ineffectual, and highly irreligious. I say,

First, *Most ineffectual* : For they will have the *bare saying of Prayers*, without the least minding of what is said, to be acceptable to, and prevalent with, Almighty God : and congruously to this fine Doctrine, their Church enjoins them to be said in a Tongue which is unknown to the Generality of her Children. Though the *Papists* cannot, for Shame, but acknowledge it a *good Thing* to give Attention to what is said in the Worship of God, yet, I say, it is well known that they deny it to be *necessary* so to do; and make the mere *Opus Operatum*, the Work done, sufficient ; and that in all Acts of Devotion whatsoever. And besides, their divine Service is made by them an idle and vain Piece of Pageantry, by the Abundance of foppish Ceremonies with which it is burthened. Nay,

Secondly, It is made as *wicked as ineffectual* : it being accompanied with so great Immoralities as *gross Idolatries*, together with other very impious Practices : whereof

First, *Their worshipping of Images* is a notorious Instance; they making Pictures of Christ and his Cross, and even of the Holy Trinity, and giving (as they themselves profess to do) *Latria* or divine Honour to them. And as for what they have, by stretching their Wits upen the Tenters, invented

Chap. IV. *The Design of Christianity.* 167

invented to defend themselves from the Guilt of *Idolatry* in those Actions, it will do the Heathens as much Service as themselves, and no less successfully clear, and acquit them from that foul Imputation. *Celsus*, in Defence of their Idol, says, That they are not Gods, but Θεῶν ἀναθήματα, *Gifts consecrated to them.* And the Heathens in *Lactantius* are brought in saying, *Non ipsa timeamus simulachra, &c. We fear, or worship not the Images themselves, but those whose Representatives they are, and to whose Names they are consecrated.* And several other Citations might be produced to shew, that the *Divine Honour* which was by the Heathens bestowed on their Images, was *relative only* (as the *Papists* say theirs is, and think they get a main Matter by so saying) and not *absolute*. But as for their Worship of the *Image of the Cross*, it is grosser *Idolatry* than I believe can be shewn, that even the wiser Sort of Pagans were ever guilty of. For the *Cross* itself is the ultimate Term of their divine Adoration, and the *Image* is worshipped *relatively*, as it represents the *Cross*. In short, their *Image-worship* is as expressly forbidden by the second Commandment as Words can do it; and one may conclude that they themselves are not a little conscious of it, in that *That Commandment* is left out of their Offices of frequent Use.

Secondly, Another plain Instance of their *Idolatry* is their *praying to Saints departed*. And whereas they pretend that they do not pay them

any divine Honour, and that they only pray to the Saints to pray for them; this Pretence is but a pitifully thin Cobweb to hide the Idolatry of that Practice. For besides that, their Invocations of them, and of the *same Saints* too in innumerable Places at vast Distances each from other, imply an Opinion of such an Excellency in them, (*viz.* such a Knowledge as can hardly be at all short of *Omniscience*) as we can no where find God Almighty has vouchsafed to any Creature; they likewise make their Prayers to them with Professions of Confidence in them, and with all the Rites of Invocation, in sacred Offices, and in Places set apart for divine Worship; and moreover they set particular Saints over whole Cities and Countries (one single one over this, and another over that) and put up Petitions to them for their Help and Succour. And the *Roman Catechism* made by the Decree of the Council of *Trent*, and published by the Pope's Command, doth give them Encouragement thus to do (as the late Bishop of *Down* shewed in the former Part of his *Dissuasive from Popery*) in these Words; *The Saints are therefore to be invoked, because they continually make Prayers for the Health of Mankind, and God gives us many Benefits by their Merit and Favour. And it is lawful to have Recourse to the Favour or Grace of the Saints, and to use their Help; for they undertake the Patronage of us.* And he adds that the Council of *Trent* not only says, It is good to fly to their Prayers, but also

Chap. IV. *The Design of Christianity.* 169

also to their *Aid*, and to their *Help*. And he furthermore reminds them of this Distich in the Church of St. *Laurence* * in *Rome* :

*Continet hoc Templum Sanctorum corpora pura,
A quibus auxilium suppleri, poscere cura.*

*Within this Church Saints holy Bodies lie,
Pray them, that they with Help would thee supply.*

So that over and above the great *Impiety* of their *praying to Saints*, discovered in making them in some kind *equal* with *Christ*, and in derogating from the Sufficiency of his Merits, Satisfaction and Intercession; God being prayed to with Reliance on *theirs* as well as on *his*, and through *them* as well as *him*, (as may be farther and largely shewn in their Prayers, and chiefly in those to the Blessed Virgin,) I say, besides this gross *Impiety* of that Practice, it can never be justified from the Charge of *Idolatry*. And by whatsoever Arguments they endeavour therein to prove themselves no Idolaters, it will be no difficult Matter by the same to vindicate the Heathens from that Crime in worshipping their *Dæmons*, *Heroes* and *deified Emperors*. And for *Hierocles* his Part, I cannot find that he allows of praying to any one but him whom he calls the *supreme God* : for, speaking of the Honour

* Sess. 9.

170 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. III.

that is due to that Order of Spirits which is immediately subordinate to him, and above the *Dæmons* and *Heroes*, all he says concerning it, is, ^t that it consists in understanding the Excellency of their Natures, and in endeavouring after a Likeness to them; whereas he hath afterward a very excellent Discourse of the necessary Obligation Men are under of praying to God.

But I have not yet instanced in the worst Part of the *Popish* Prayers to departed Saints. The Blasphemies contained in those to the *Virgin Mary* are such as I would not defile my Pen with the Recital of any of them, did I not know it to be too needful. She is stiled in their publick Prayers, *the Saviour of despairing Souls; the Bestower of spiritual Grace, and Dispenser of the most divine Gifts; one higher than the Heavens, and deeper than the Earth; and many such Compellations as are proper only to some one Person of the glorious Trinity, are given in them to her. In her Anthem she is supplicated for Pardon of Sin, for Grace and Glory. And the forementioned learned Bishop observeth, that in the Mass-Book penned A. D. 1538, and used in the Polonian Churches, they call the Blessed Virgin viam ad vitam, &c. the Way to Life, the Governess of all the World, the Reconciler of Sinners with God, the Fountain of Remission of Sins, Light of Light: and at last she is there saluted with an Ave uni-*

Chap. IV. *The Design of Christianity.* 171

versæ Trinitatis Mater, Hail thou Mother of the Holy Trinity. And he adds, that the Council of *Constance* in the Hymn they call a *Sequence*, did invoke the *Virgin* in the same manner as Councils did use to invoke the *Holy Ghost*: that they call her the *Mother of Grace, the Remedy of the Miserable, the Fountain of Mercy, and the Light of the Church.* And lastly, his Lordship alledges a *Psalter of our Lady*, that has been several times printed at *Venice*, at *Paris*, and *Leipsick*, the Title of which is, *The Psalter of the Blessed Virgin, compiled by the seraphical Doctor S. Bonaventure, &c.* which consisteth of the *Psalms of David*, one hundred and fifty in Number: in which the Name of *Lord* is left out, and that of *Lady* put in, and altered where it was necessary they should, to make Sense. Therein, whatsoever *David* said, whether Prayers or Praises of God and *Christ*, they say of the *Blessed Virgin*; and whether (says he) all that can be said without intolerable *Blasphemy*, we suppose needs not much *Disputation.* Who would not readily conclude it altogether impossible for any Men to invent, or approve, nay, or not to have Indignation against, such daring and most execrable Impieties, that are not utterly bereft of their Senses, or are but one Remove from perfect *Atheists*? There are divers other most prodigious Sayings concerning the *Virgin Mary* transcribed out of the approved Books of great Sons of the *Roman Church*, in the now cited *Diffuasive from Popery*, to which I refer

172 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. III.

I refer the Reader. And to them I will add some, which may doubtless vie with the worst that we can well imagine were ever uttered, of one *Johannes Argentus*, a prime Catholick Youth, which he has exposed to the View of the World in a right worthy Piece, treating of the seven Excellencies of the most Blessed Virgin. Says he, *Christus servit atque assiduè ministrat Matri suæ*, *Christ serveth and continually administreth to his Mother*; and next vents himself in a great Fit of Devotion to her thus: *O si liceret, quàm libenter me illi socium adjungerem, &c.* If it might be lawful, Oh, how gladly would I join myself with him as his Companion! How willingly would I learn of him the Way of perfectly serving thyself and God! (the Reader anon will not judge his placing the Virgin before God himself, as proceeding from Inadvertency,) How willingly would I ease my most sweet Jesus of this his Labour! O Lord Jesus, my most lovely Saviour, permit me to perform some Service to thy Mother; but if thou wilt not grant me this, yet at least give me Leave, that whilst thou serveest thy Mother, I may serve thee. And he tells us afterward, that, God is in other Creatures after a threefold manner, by his Essence, by his Presence, and by his Power; but in the most Blessed Virgin after a fourth manner, viz. by Identity, or being one, and the self same with her. Who could think that the worst should be yet behind? Let the Reader judge whether it be or not! He farther says, That her seventh Degree of Excellency consists
in

Chap. IV. *The Design of Christianity.* 173

in this, quòd sit Domina Dei, that she is the Mistress of God. And then a Line or two after (as if he thought he had not sufficiently performed the Part of a most impudent Blasphemer,) he adds, that *supra ipsum thronum Dei solium suum collocavit, she hath erected her Seat above the very Throne of God.* This was a Fellow that had improved to Purpose the Prayers he had learned of his holy Mother. Surely she could not find in her Heart to deny so passionately-devout a Worshipper of the Holy Virgin, a very considerable Share in the Merits of her *Supererogations*: or rather may we not think that she would judge him so great a Saint, as to stand in no need of them; and to have of his *own* to spare, wherewith to add to the Riches of her Treasury, for the Relief of those who being conscious to themselves of being too cold Devotionists, can be persuaded to go to the Charge of them?

Have we not now great Cause to wonder, that the *Papists* should take it so very heinously at our Hands, that we fasten upon them the Imputation of *Idolatry*! This very Wretch would have been sensible of an unsufferable Abuse, should one have called him an *Idolater*, as blasphemous a one as he was; and notwithstanding his having even *more than deified* a mere Creature, and advanced her Throne *above* her Creator's.—Lord! to what heights of Impiety will Superstition lead Men! and how thick is that Darkness with which she blinds the Eyes of her Captives, that it will not
suffer

174 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. III.

suffer them to discern that Guilt which is no whit less evident than the Sun at Noon. But,

Thirdly, The grossest Instance of the *Church of Rome's Idolatry* we have yet omitted ; and that is their *worshipping the consecrated Bread*, not as God's Representative, but (which is far worse) as God himself, in *the Sacrament of the Altar*, (as they call it) and on other Occasions. This is no where to be parallel'd for the Folly of it, no not among the most barbarous and brutish Nations ; it being founded upon the most absurd, contradictory, portentous, and monstrous Conceit, that ever entered the Head of any Mortal ; as they have had it, to the Confusion of their Faces, proved to them by a Multitude of learned Persons of the Reformed Religion : who have also so fully, and with such mighty and irresistible Strength made good the forementioned Charge of *Idolatry*, and of other impious Practices and Principles against them, that it is unimaginable how it should be possible, that any who are not stark-blind, or resolved that they will not see, should not acknowledge them. And as for the elaborate Tricks by which they endeavour to justify themselves from those Accusations, they may doubtless, whensoever they shall have a mind to it, devise others no less plausible with as little Pains, to make forcing of Virgins no Rape, lying with other Folks Wives no Adultery, cutting of Purses no Theft, robbing of Churches no Sacrilege ; and, in one Word, they may with as little Exercise of their Brains invent
Ways

Chap. IV. *The Design of Christianity.* 175

Ways to do whatsoever is most flatly forbidden in the Ten Commandments, without being guilty of transgressing any one of them.

I might proceed to instance in very many other Doctrines of the *Romish* Church, which by what we have said of the Christian Religion we may be perfectly assured are *Anti-Christian*; but I will only add two or three more. As, their asserting the Insufficiency of the Holy Scriptures for Men's Salvation, and denying them to be the sole Rule of Faith, and joining with them their own paltry *Traditions* as equally necessary to be believed: and this against the express Words of St. Paul to Timothy, 2 Epist. Chap. iii. where he tells him, that *the Holy Scriptures are able to make him wise unto Salvation, through Faith which is in Christ Jesus.* And that *all Scripture is given by Inspiration of God, and is profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness; that the Man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good Works.* And their teaching that the Gospel is *obscure* and difficult to be understood, even in things *necessary to be believed and practised.* Which, as it makes it greatly inefficacious for the Purpose for which we have proved it is designed, so it opens a Gap for vile Interpretations of any Part of it, and exposes it to the Power of Hereticks, and especially of the *Romish* ones, to make it a mere Piece of Wax: which none can doubt, who consider also therewith their Doctrine of *implicit Faith*; and that
other

176 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. III.

other upon which it is grounded, viz. That of the *Infallibility of their Church*: which, as the *Jesuits* define, is seated in the Pope's Chair. But whether it be asserted that the Popes have an unerring Faculty, or they and their General Councils together, this Doctrine being received (without the least Ground) as unquestionably true, greatly hazards, nay, and even *necessitates* the betraying of Men to the very worst both of Opinions and Practices, whensoever this pretended infallible Guide shall be pleased to propose them. And whosoever believes it, must (to use the Words of Mr. *Chillingworth*) be prepared in Mind to esteem Virtue Vice, and Vice Virtue; Christianity Anti-christianism, and Anti-christianism Christianity, if the Pope shall so determine. And this Doctrine, without doubt, is that which causes those of the *Papists* to stick so fast in filthy Mire, and to persist so obstinately in their foul Errors, who are not detained therein by the Love of Gain (with which their Popes, and other Ecclesiasticks by the Means of divers of them are mightily enriched) or by the dear Affection they bear to other Lusts, for the Satisfaction of which they are so exactly fitted. Their Doctrines being, very many of them, so ridiculously absurd, plainly false, and of such dangerous Consequence; I say, nothing else, certainly, could hold the sincerer Sort of *Papists* in the Belief of them, but this Consideration, that any one of them being
let

Chap. V. *The Design of Christianity.* 177

let go, their great *Dagon* of the Churches *Infal-*
libility must necessarily go to the Ground with it.

I might also instance in their Doctrine of the *Dispensation of the most solemn Oaths*, which is no less destructive to *human Society*, than it is to *Piety*. And in that of the Pope's Power to absolve Subjects from their Allegiance to their lawful Sovereigns : and to them add a great Number of Maxims of the most famous Order among them, the *Jesuits*, and Resolutions of Cases of Conscience, which are as wicked and destructive of a holy Life, as the Devil himself can well devise. But to be employed with *Hercules* in emptying the *Augean Stable*, would be as acceptable a Work as stirring so far in this filthy Sink. Who-soever shall peruse the *Mystery of Jesuitism*, may find more than enough to turn his Stomach, tho' it should be none of the most squeamish, and to make him stand astonished, and bless himself, that ever such loathsome and abominable Stuff should come from Persons who derive their Name from the holy *Jesus*.

But to hasten to the Conclusion of this Chapter, the most pure and holy Religion of our Saviour the *Church of Rome* has defiled with as impure and unholy Opinions and Practices; and has taken the most effectual Course, not only to render it a feeble and insignificant Thing for accomplishing the Design for which it was intended by the blessed Founder of it, but also to make it unhappily successful in serving the direct contrary. The great

178 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. III.

Mystery of Godliness she has transformed into a grand *Mystery of Iniquity*; and by that Means mightily confirmed its professed Enemies, the *Jews* and *Mahometans*, in their Enmity against it. And, for my own Part, I should not stick to say, with *Averroes* (when he observed that the Popish Christians adored what they eat) *Sit anima mea cum Philosophis*, *Let my Soul take its Fate with the Philosophers*, on a Supposition I thought that Christianity was such a Religion as the Church of *Rome* makes it. As much as I admire it now, I should then prefer that of *Socrates*, *Plato* and *Cicero* far before it. Though I abhor to imitate the *Papists* in their devilish Uncharitableness, so far as to pronounce them all in a State of Damnation; yet I dare assert with the greatest Confidence, that all who continue in Communion with that degenerate and apostate Church, run infinite Hazards: and moreover, it is impossible any *sincere* Persons should give an *explicit* and *understanding Assent* to many of her Doctrines; but whosoever can find in his Heart to *practise* upon them, can be nothing better than a shamefully debauched and a most immoral Wretch. Nor is it conceivable what should induce any to exchange the *Reformed* for the *Popish* Religion (as too many have of late done) who have but a competent Understanding of both, except it be the Desire of serving some corrupt Interest. And we plainly see, that the Generality of those who turn Apostates from the Church of *England* to that of *Rome*,

Chap. V. *The Design of Christianity.* 179

are such People as were a Scandal to us, while they continued in our Church : and that *Atheism* and *Popery*, are the common Sanctuaries to which the most vicious and profane of this Age betake themselves.

C H A P. V.

The Third Inference.

That these two Sorts of Persons are very foolish : 1. Such as expect to have their Share in the Salvation of the Gospel without true Holiness. 2. Such, much more, as encourage themselves by the Grace of the Gospel in Unholiness,

THirdly, There is nothing we are more assured of, by what has been discoursed of the *Design of Christianity*, than that these two Sorts of Persons are guilty of extreme Foolishness : namely, *Those that expect to have a Share in the Salvation of the Gospel without true Holiness* : and much more, *Those that encourage themselves by the Grace of the Gospel in their Unholiness.*

First, *Those that expect to have their Share in the Salvation of the Gospel without true Holiness.* I fear that such People are not confined within

180 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. III.

the Limits of the *Romish* Church, but that a great Number of Protestants also may be deservedly accused upon this Account. But by so much more foolish are *these* than the *Papists*, by how much *better* things *their* Religion teacheth them than the Religion of the *Papists*. Though I must likewise with great Concern acknowledge, that too many Opinions have been unhappily foisted into it, which give too great Encouragement to a careless Life. But that those who promise to themselves an Interest in the Salvation purchased by *Jesus Christ*, either from their Baptism, and partaking of certain Christian Privileges; or from their being of such or such a Sect and Mode of Professors; or from their supposed Orthodoxy and good Belief, and Zeal against erroneous Doctrines; or from their imagining *Christ's* Righteousness *theirs*, and applying the Promises to themselves; or from their abstaining from the grosser and more scandalous Sins; or from their doing some externally good Actions; and have in the mean time no Care to be entirely obedient; to mortify every Lust; and to be endued with an inward Principle of Holiness; that those, I say, who thus act, are guilty of most egregious and stupid Folly, is manifest from what has been discoursed of the *Design of Christianity*.

For we have shewn, not only that Reformation of Life from the *Practice*, and Purification of Heart from the *liking* of Sin, are as plainly as can be asserted in the Gospel to be absolutely necessary to give Men a Right to the Promises of it;

Chap. V. *The Design of Christianity.* 181

it ; but also that its great *Salvation* even consists in it : that, *Salvation from Sin* is the grand Design of the Christian Religion, and that *from Wrath* is the Result of it. I will instance in two more Scriptures for the farther Proof of this. The Apostle St. Paul says, *Ephes. ii. 5, &c. Even when we were dead in Trespasses and Sins, hath he quickned us together with Christ, (by Grace ye are saved) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly Places in Christ Jesus: that in the Ages to come he might shew the exceeding Riches of his Grace, in his Kindness towards us through Christ Jesus. For by Grace ye are saved, through Faith, (or by the Means of believing the Gospel) and that not of yourselves, it is the Gift of God.* Where, by the *Salvation* which the *Ephesian* Christians are said to have obtained, and in the bestowing of which the exceeding Riches of God's Grace appeared, is plainly to be understood their Deliverance from their former heathenish Impieties and sinful Practices : and so is it interpreted by our best Expositors. Again it is said, *Titus iii. 5. Not by Works of Righteousness which we have done, but according to his Mercy he saved us (how saved us ? it follows) by the washing of Regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.* Our Saviour gives Ease to our Sin-sick Souls by recovering them to Health : and his *Salvation* first consists in curing our Wounds, and secondarily in freeing us from the Smart occasioned by them. St. Peter tells the Christians, that by his Stripes they were healed, 1 Pet. ii. 24. It

182 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. III.

being a Quotation out of *Isaiah* liii. 5. *Clemens Alexandrinus, Stromat.* ^a has this Saying to the same Purpose, ἡ συγγνώμη δὲ ἔστι κατὰ ἀφεσιν ἀλλὰ κατὰ ἱατρὸν οὐκ ἰατρῆς, *Pardon consists not so much in Remission, as in Healing*; that is, the Pardon of the Gospel chiefly discovers itself in *curing* Men of their Sins; in delivering Sinners from the *Power* of them, rather than from the mere *Punishment* due to them. By which Words that learned Father declared that he looked upon the *subduing* of Sin as a more eminent Act of Grace, than the bare *Forgiveness* of it. Now, would that Man be accounted better than an Ideot, who being sorely hurt, should expect from his Surgeon perfect Ease, while he will not permit him to lay a Plaister on his Wound? Or that being deadly sick, would look that his Physician should deliver him from his *Pain*, when he will not take any of his Medicines for the Removal of the Cause of it? But of far greater Folly are all those guilty, who will not be persuaded to part with their *Sins*, and yet hope for the Salvation of their *Souls*. He who looks for this, expects that which implies a most palpable Contradiction, and is in its own Nature impossible. It has been fully enough shewn, that mere Deliverance from *Misery*, cannot possibly be without Deliverance from *Sin*; and, *much* less eternal Blessedness in the Enjoyment of God.

^a Lib. ii. p. 391.

Secondly,

Chap. V. *The Design of Christianity.* 183

Secondly, But how mad then are those, *who turn the Grace of God declared in the Gospel into Wantonness*, and take Encouragement from the abundant Kindness and good Will therein expressed to Sinners, with the more Security and Boldness to commit Sin? We read of such in the Epistle of St. *Jude*; and God knows there are too many such in these our Days. But seeing it is so grossly foolish for Men to hope to be saved, notwithstanding their living in the Allowance of known Sins, what desperate *Madness* is it to be emboldened in ungodly Practices, by the Offers Christ makes of Pardon and Salvation to them. These declare that they look upon the *Design of Christianity* not only as different from what it has been demonstrated to be, but also as directly *opposite*, and perfectly *contrary* to it. These must not only think their Saviour to be no *Friend* to Holiness, but to be even its greatest *Enemy*, and a Minister of Sin and Wickedness. They make him the chief Servant of the Devil, instead of coming to *destroy his Works*. They make the *Christian Religion* more vile by far than that of *Mahomet*^b; and such a Religion, as those who are not the very worst of Men, must needs abominate. *Shall we sin* (says the Apostle^c) *that Grace may abound?* *God forbid!* Those who think they can magnify the free Grace of God in Christ by thus doing, or that they may take Encourage-

^b 1 John iii. 8.

^c Rom. vi.

184 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. III.

ment from it to continue in Sin, make this Grace unworthy of Mens Acceptance, and therefore no Grace at all. Nay, they make Almighty God the greatest Enemy to Mankind in sending his Son *Jesus* and his Gospel among us. For *Sin* being so evidently the *greatest of Evils*, it can be no other than the most significant Expression of Hatred to us, to encourage us to the Commission of it. It is so far from being Part of our *Christian Liberty*, to be delivered from our Obligation to *all* or *any* of the Laws of Righteousness, that such a Deliverance would be the most unsupportable Yoke of Bondage. If any Man can be so silly as to object that of the Apostle, *Rom. vi. 14. Ye are not under the Law, but under Grace*: let him give himself an Answer by reading the whole Verse, and then make ill Use of that Passage if he can tell how. The Words foregoing it are these: *Sin shall not have Dominion over you*, and these Words are a Proof of it, *For ye are not under the Law, but under Grace*: that is, as if he should say, It is the most inexcusable thing for you to continue under the Dominion and Power of Sin, because ye are not under the weak and inefficacious Pædagogy of the Law of *Moses*, but a Dispensation of Grace, wherein there is not only *Forgiveness* assured to truly repenting Sinners, but *Strength* afforded to enable to the subduing and Mortification of all Sin. Our Saviour hath told us expressly ^d, that he came not to *destroy the Law*,

^d Mat. v.

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Chap. V. *The Design of Christianity.* 185

(that is, the *Moral Law*) but to fulfil it: and that *Heaven and Earth shall sooner pass away, than that one jot, or Tittle thereof shall fail.* And it is absolutely impossible, that our Obligation to it should cease, while we continue *Men.* All the Duties therein contained being most necessary and natural Results from the Relation we stand in to *God* and to *one another*, and from the original *Make and Constitution* of human Souls.

But it is too great an Honour to the Doctrine of *Libertinism* to spend two Words in its Confutation; it being so prodigious, so monstrous a Doctrine, that it would be almost uncharitable to judge that Professor of Christianity not to have suffered the Loss of his Wits who can have the least Favour for it; supposing him to have but the least Smattering in the Christian Religion. It is an amazing thing, that such a Thought should be entertained by such a one, while he is not utterly forsaken of his Intellectuals: our Saviour's Gospel being wholly levelled at the Mark of rendering us obedient to the Laws of God. Let me speak to such as so shamefully abuse our incomparable Religion, as to take Liberty from thence to be in any kind immoral, in the Words of St. Paul, *Rom. ii. 4, 5. Despisest thou the Riches of God's Goodness and Forbearance and Long-suffering, not knowing that his Goodness leadeth thee (or designs the leading of thee) to Repentance? But after thy Hardness and impenitent Heart, treasurest*
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186 *The Design of Christianity. Sect. III.*
up to thyself Wrath against the Day of Wrath, and
Revelation of the righteous Judgment of God, &c.

C H A P. VI.

The Fourth Inference.

That a right Understanding of the Design of Christianity will give us the true Notion, 1. Of Justifying Faith, 2. Of the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness.

Fourthly, From what has been said of the *Design of Christianity* may be clearly inferred the *true Notion of Justifying Faith*, and of the *Imputation of Christ's Righteousness*.

First, *Of Justifying Faith.* We thence learn, *That it is such a Belief of the Truth of the Gospel, as implies a sincere Resolution of Obedience unto all its Precepts ; or (which is the same thing) implies true Holiness in the Nature of it : and moreover that it justifies as it does so. For surely the Faith which intitles a Sinner to so high a Privilege as that of Justification, must needs be such as complies with all the Purposes of Christ's Coming into the World, and especially with his grand Purpose ; and it is no less necessary that it should justify as*
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Chap. VI. *The Design of Christianity.* 187

it does this ; that is, as it receives Christ for a *Lord*, as well as for a *Saviour*. But I need not now distinguish between these two, there being but a *notional* Difference between them in this matter. For Christ (as was shewn) as he is a *Saviour*, designs our *Holiness* : his *Salvation* being chiefly that from the worst of Evils, *Sin* ; and principally consisting in Deliverance from the *Power* of it.

I have scarcely more admired at any thing, than that any *worthy* Men especially should be so difficultly persuaded to embrace this Account of *Justifying Faith* ; and should perplex and make intricate so very plain a Doctrine. If this be not to seek Knots in a Bulrush, I know not what is. I wish there were nothing throughout the Bible less easily intelligible than this is, and I should then pronounce it one of the plainest of all Books that ever Pen wrote. For seeing the great End of the Gospel is to make Men good, what Pretence can there be for thinking, that *Faith* is the *Condition* (or I will use the Word *Instrument*, as improper and obscure as it is) of *Justification*, since it complies with only the Precept of *relying on Christ's Merits* for the obtaining thereof, especially when nothing is more manifest than that Obedience to the *other Precepts* must go before Obedience to *this* ; and that a Man may not rely on the Merits of Christ for the Forgiveness of his Sins, (and he is most presumptuous in so doing, and puts an Affront upon his Saviour too) till he
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188 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. III.

be sincerely willing to be reformed. And besides such a *Reliance* is ordinarily to be found among unregenerate, and even the very worst of Men. And therefore how can it be otherwise, than that *that Act of Faith* must needs have a Hand in *justifying*, and the *special* Hand too, which distinguishes it from that which is to be found in such Persons. And I add, what good Ground can Men have for this Fancy, when our Saviour has merited the Pardon of our Sins for this End, that it might be an effectual Motive to forsake them? And can any thing in the World be more indisputably clear, than, if the only *direct* Scope that Christianity drives at be the subduing of Sin in us, and our Freedom from its Guilt or Obligation to Punishment be the Consequent of this (as I think has been demonstrated with abundant Evidence;) that Faith invests us with a Title to this Deliverance no otherwise than as *dying to Sin*, and so consequently *living to God*, are the Products and Fruit of it? And seeing that, *one* End, and the *ultimate* End too, of Christ's Coming was to turn us from our Iniquities, if the Nature of *Faith* considered as *justifying* must needs be made wholly to consist in *Recumbence* and *Reliance on him*, he shall be my *Apollo* that can give me a sufficient Reason why it ought only to consist in *Reliance on the Merits of Christ* for the Pardon of Sin, and not also on his *Power* for the *Mortification of it*. In short, Is it possible that Faith in Christ's Blood for the Forgiveness of Sin should be the only Act
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Chap. VI. *The Design of Christianity.* 189

which justifies a Sinner, when so many plain Texts assure us, that he died also to make us *holy*, and that his Death was designed to deliver us from dying in order to a farther End, namely to this, that we should *live unto him who died for us*?

I will never more trust any Faculty at reasoning, I can pretend to, no not in the plainest and most undoubted Cases, if I am mistaken here. And will take the Boldness to tell those who are displeased with this Account of *Justifying Faith*, that (in my Opinion) it is impossible they should once think of any other, if they ever seriously weighed and well considered the *Design of Christianity*. I insist the more upon this, because those Persons Explication of this Point has been greatly liable to be used to ill Purposes by insincere Persons, and has given infinite Advantage to the dangerous Error of *Antinomianism*. And, for my Part, I must confess that I would not willingly be the Man who should undertake to encounter one of the Champions of that *foul Cause*, with the Admission of this Principle, *That Faith justifies, only as it apprehends the Merits and Righteousness of Jesus Christ*: I must certainly have great *Luck*, or my Adversary but little *Cunning*, if I were not forced to repent me of such an Engagement.

Secondly, And as for the other Doctrine of the *Imputation of Christ's Righteousness*; we learn from the *Design of Christianity* that this is the true

Expli-

190 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. III.

Explication of it: namely, That it consists in dealing with *sincerely* righteous Persons, as if they were *perfectly* so, for the Sake of Christ's Righteousness. The *grand* Intent of the Gospel being to make us Partakers of an *inward* and *real* Righteousness; and it being but a *secondary* one that we should be *accepted* and rewarded as if we were *completely* righteous; it is not possible that any other Notion of this Doctrine should have any Truth in it. For, as from thence it appears, that there can be no such Imputation of Christ's Righteousness offered in the Gospel, as serves to make Men remiss in their Prosecution of an inward Righteousness; so is it manifest likewise, That that Doctrine is designed for a Motive to quicken and excite Men in their Endeavours after such a Righteousness as this is. So far is it from tending to cause in us an undervaluing and slight Esteem of it, that, as sure as that *the ultimate Design of Christianity* is to endue us with it, it must be intended for no other Purpose but to farther and promote that Business: and it is effectual thereunto in that Manner, that we shewed the exceeding great and precious *Promises* of the Gospel are.

But because both these Points are discussed in my Treatise intitled the *Principles and Practices of certain moderate Divines*, &c. I have said so little of the *former*, and will proceed no farther on *this*; but refer the Reader thither, and to other much more

Chap. VII. *The Design of Christianity.* 191
more elaborate Discourses for his fuller Satisfaction. And indeed it was enough for me in this Place to shew, That the Notion laid down in *that* Book of *each* of these Doctrines, evidently follows from the Proposition, which is the Subject of this Book.

C H A P. VII.

The Fifth Inference.

That we learn from the Design of Christianity the great Measure and Standard, whereby we are to judge of Doctrines. How we are to judge of the Truth of Doctrines.

Fifthly, we learn from what hath been said of the *Design of Christianity*, what is the great Measure and Standard whereby we are to judge of Doctrines; both whether they are true or false, and in what Degree necessary to be received or rejected.

First, we understand how to judge of the Truth of Doctrines. We may be certain that, seeing the *Design of Christianity* is to make Men Holy, whatsoever Opinions do either directly, or in their evident Consequences, obstruct the promoting

190 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. III.

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First, we understand how to judge of the *Truth of Doctrines*. We may be certain that, seeing the *Design of Christianity is to make Men Holy*, whatsoever Opinions do either *directly*, or in their *evident Consequences*, obstruct the promoting

21 *The Design of Christianity. Sect. III.*

ing thereof, are absolutely false; and with as great Peremptoriness and Confidence as they may be, by some who *call* themselves Christians, obtruded upon us, they are not of Christ, nor any Part of his Religion. And those which do *appear* to us to discourage from serious Endeavours after Piety and true Goodness, we ought for that Reason, while we have such an Opinion of them, most vehemently to *suspect* them. For it being the Business of our Saviour's coming into the World, or of his blessed Gospel, effectually to persuade us to use our utmost Diligence in subduing our Lusts, and qualifying our Souls by Purity and Holiness for the Enjoyment of God, and to make our Endeavours *successful* for that Purpose; we may be assured that he hath not either by himself immediately, or by his Apostles, delivered any thing that opposes this Design. If (says St. Paul^e) *I build again the things that I destroyed, I make myself a Transgressor*: and no Man who has in him the least of a Christian, will once suspect, that the perfectly *wise* as well as *holy* Jesus should so manage the Business he has undertaken, as what he builds with one Hand, to pull down with the other; and frustrate that Design by *some* Doctrines which he promotes by *others*.

Those Doctrines, on the other Hand, which in their own Nature evidently tend to the serving

^e Gal. ii.

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Chap. VII. *The Design of Christianity.* 193

of this Design of Christianity, we may conclude are most true and genuine : and for those which, upon our serious Consideration, we are persuaded do so, we ought upon that Account to have a Kindness, and to believe them of an higher than *human* Original. And therefore those which give the most honourable Accounts of God, his Nature, and dealing with the Sons of Men; that most magnify his Grace, and best vindicate his Holiness, Justice, and Goodness, commend themselves to our Belief with infinite Advantage : because the *most worthy* Conceptions of the Deity are exceedingly *helpful*, and also *necessary*, to the loving of God, and serving him as becomes us, and have a mighty Influence into the ordering and Regulation of our whole Man ; as might be largely shewn.

Those Doctrines, again, that most discountenance all Sins both against the first and second Table, and best enable to answer all Pleas and Pretences for Security and Carelessness ; that are most agreeable to the innate Dictates of our Minds, and least gratify and please our carnal Part ; we may from the Consideration of the *Design of Christianity* be greatly persuaded of their *Truth*.

And, on the contrary, Those which are apt to insfil into Mens Minds any unlovely Notions of the Divine Nature, which disparage his Holiness, or lessen his Kindness and good Will to his Creation, and the Obligations of the Generality of the

194 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. III.

World to him and his Son *Jesus*, and so make his Grace a narrow and scanty Thing, or that naturally cast any dishonourable Reflections on any Person of the most Holy Trinity, must needs be *false*. As also those which make Religion to be a mere *passive* Thing, wholly *God's Work*, and not at all *ours*; or which cramp Men, and persuade them that they are utterly void of the least Ability to co-operate with the Grace of God, or to do any thing towards their own Salvation; or any way whatsoever discourage them from the diligent Prosecution of Holiness; or deprive us of any Help afforded us towards our gaining, and Growth in Grace, either by putting a Slur upon the written Word, in advancing above it the *Light within Men*, and in *enthusiastical* Pretences to immediate Revelations, &c. Or else by teaching Men to flight any one Ordinance of the Gospel, &c. Or such Doctrines as tend to introduce Confusion into the Church of Christ, and to deprive it of all Government and Order; or in short, which give Countenance to any Immorality whatsoever: I say, as sure as the Christian Religion is true, and that what we have proved to be the Design thereof, is so, such Doctrines as these must needs be *false*.

What our Saviour says of false Prophets, is as true of most Doctrines, *By their Fruits ye shall know them*: we may understand whether they have any Relation to Christianity or no, by the Design

Chap. VII. *The Design of Christianity.* 195

Design they drive at, and their evident Consequences.

And I may add, that we may make a shrewd Guess what those *particular Ways and Modes of Religion* are (which the various Sects we are cantonized into have espoused to themselves, and are so fond of) by the proper and most distinguishing Effects of them. If we perceive that they make the great Sticklers for them, to differ from others chiefly in Unconcernedness about the most important and substantial Duties of *Morality*; and in laying the greatest Weight upon certain little Trifles; and placing their Religion in mere *Externals*; or that the things whereby they are most peculiarly discriminated from other Folks are spiritual Pride, and fond Conceitedness of themselves, and a fierce or scornful Behaviour towards those who approve not of their Way; Uncharitableness, Morosity, and Peevishness; a seditious, ungovernable, and untameable Spirit, &c. I say, if we observe such as these to be the most distinguishing Effects of their several Modes and Forms, we have sufficient Reason from thence alone greatly to presume, that they have not the Stamp of *Jus Christianum* upon them, that they are not of Christ, but of their own Invention. The Wisdom which is from Above is quite another thing, and begets perfectly other kind of Fruits; as shall be shewn hereafter.

But to return, *The Design of the Gospel* is (as was said) the great Standard by which we are

196 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. III.

to judge of the *Truth* of Opinions: those who *seem* to us to oppose this Design, we are bound to *suspect*, because they do so; but those which *apparently do this*, we must with heartiest Indignation reject. And though we should meet with some Places of Scripture that at first Sight may seem to favour them, we may not be stumbled upon that Account, but be confident that whatsoever is their true Meaning, as sure as they have God for their Author, they cannot possibly patronize any such Doctrines.

And, lastly, in examining which of two Opinions is true, that oppose each other, and do seem to be much alike befriended by the holy Scriptures, it is doubtless a very safe Course to consider as impartially as we can, which tends most to serve the *great End* of Christianity, and to prefer that which we are persuaded does so.

C H A P. VIII.

How we are to judge of the Necessity of Doctrines, either to be embraced or rejected. A brief Discourse of the Nature of Points Fundamental. How we may know whether we embrace all such, and whether we hold not any destructive and damnable Errors.

SEcondly, *The Design of Christianity is the great Measure* whereby we are to judge, as of the *Truth*, so also of the *Necessity of Doctrines*, either to be embraced or rejected.

First, We may thereby understand, in what Degree we ought to esteem those *necessary to be by all received*, of which we ourselves are convinced of the *Truth*; or, which of such are *fundamental Points* of the Christian Faith, and which not.

First, It is plain, That in the general those and those only are *primarily* and in their own Nature *Fundamentals*, which are absolutely necessary to accomplish in us that Design. Such, as without the Knowledge and Belief of which, it is impossible to acquire that inward Righteousness and true Holiness which the Christian Religion aims to introduce. It is in itself absolutely neces-

198 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. III.

sary, not to be ignorant of, or disbelieve, any of those Points, upon which the effecting of the great Business of the Gospel in us necessarily depends. The Particulars of these I shall not stand to enumerate, because (as will appear from what will be said anon) it is not needful to have a just Table of them: and, besides, any one who understands wherein the Nature of *true Holiness* lies may be able sufficiently to inform himself what they are.

Secondly, It is as evident, That those Points of Faith are *secondarily Fundamental*, the Disbelief of which cannot consist with true Holiness, in those to whom the Gospel is sufficiently made known; although they are not in their own Nature such, as that Holiness is not in some Degree or other attainable without the Belief of them. And in the Number of these are all such Points as are express'd with indisputable Clearness. Now the Belief of these, though it is not in itself any more than in higher or lower Degrees profitable, yet is it absolutely necessary from an external Cause, *viz.* In regard of their being delivered with such Perspicuity, as that nothing can cause a Man to refuse to admit them, but that which argues him to be stark naught, and to have some unworthy and base End in so doing. But we must take Notice here, that nothing worded at all doubtfully, can be of equal Necessity to be received by all Christians; because that in regard of the Diversity of Mens Capacities, Educations, and

Chap. VIII. *The Design of Christianity.* 199

and other Means and Advantages, some things may be plainly perceived by one to be delivered in the Scriptures, which cannot be so by another.

And in the second Place, what has been said of *fundamental Truths*, is applicable by the Rule of Contraries to the opposite *Errors*, as I need not shew.

Now then, would we know whether we embrace *all the Fundamentals* of Christianity, and are guilty of no damnable and destructive *Errors*; among the great Diversity and Contrariety of Opinions that this Kingdom abounds with (I think I may say) above all other Parts of Christendom; our only way is to examine ourselves impartially after this manner.

Am I sincerely willing to obey my Creator and Redeemer in all things commanded by them? Do I entertain and harbour no Lust in my Breast? Do I heartily endeavour to have a right Understanding of the holy Scriptures, and chiefly of the Gospel, and to know what Doctrines are delivered there in order to the bettering of my Soul by them, and the Direction of my Life and Actions according to them?

If we can answer these Questions in the Affirmative; whatsoever *Mistakes* we may labour under, they can be none of them such as will undo us; because we may conclude from thence, that the *Design of Christianity* is in some good Measure accomplished in us. And whatsoever *Tenets* may be accompanied and consist with the true Love of God, and a solicitous Care to keep

200 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. III.

a Conscience void of Offence towards him and Men, we may be certain from the past Discourse of the *Design of the Gospel*, that they belong not to the Catalogue of *fundamental Errors*. This obedient Temper is the most infallible Mark (of any I know) of an *orthodox* Man; he that is indued with it, though he may *err*, cannot be an *Heretick*.

But there will be an Occasion of speaking more anon to this Argument.

C H A P. IX.

The Sixth Inference.

That the Design of Christianity teaches us what Doctrines and Practices we ought, as Christians, to be most zealous for, or against.

Sixthly, We consequently learn *what Doctrines and Practices we ought, as Christians, to be most zealous for, or against*. Of those, surely, which are most available to the Begetting and Increase of true Holiness, it is our Duty to concern ourselves most for the Defence: and those which have the greatest Tendency towards the endangering of it, to set ourselves with the greatest Industry

II Chap. IX. *The Design of Christianity.* 201

dustry and Vigour against. The Reason is plain, because the *former* most promote the Design of the Gospel, and the *latter* do it most Disservice. St. Jude exhorts in the third Verse of his Epistle, to contend earnestly for the Faith which was once delivered to the Saints; that holy Doctrine which was first delivered by our Saviour, and unanimously by his Apostles after him; which is perfectly contrary to the wicked and abominable Doctrines taught by the profane Crew he speaks of in the next Verse (and were more than probably the Gnosticks) which were crept in unawares, who were before ordained to this Condemnation, (or whose Impostures first, and then the Vengeance which should be taken of them, were formerly written of or foretold both by Christ and his Apostles) ungodly Men, turning the Grace of God into Lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. And we ought to contend against whatsoever is designed to overthrow and make ineffectual that most blessed Doctrine, more or less, according as it more or less tends so to do. Our Zeal should be altogether employed for the promoting of *personal* and *real Holiness*, and most-ly for the *essential* Parts of it, and the *necessary* Means and Helps to it. But doubtless it cannot be worth our while to lay out any considerable Matter of our Heat, either for or against doubtful Opinions, alterable Modes, Rites and Circumstances of Religion. They are not things on which much Weight may be warrantably laid;
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for they are too weak to bear it, in regard of their being so little serviceable, or disserviceable to the *Design of Christianity*. I say, eager defending or opposing of such kind of things, is (to use the Similitude of an excellent Person) like the Apes blowing at a Gloe-worm, which affords neither Light nor Warmth. Nay, it is no less *injuriously* to the *Design of Christianity*, than unserviceable and useless, as we have been effectually taught by very woful Experience. And nothing more hardens atheistically-disposed Persons, than their observing the Contention of Christians about Matters of that Nature; for thereby they take a Measure of our whole Religion. And besides an eager Concernedness about them is too ordinarily accompanied with a luke-warm, or rather frozen Indifference, concerning the most *important* Points of Christianity. It is too visibly apparent to be denied, That those which have such a *scalding hot Zeal* either for, or against things of *no Certainty* and *no Necessity*, are many of them (as their Predecessors the *Pharisees* were) in the very *other* Extreme as to not a few of the *weightiest* Matters of Religion.

C H A P. X.

The Seventh Inference.

That the Design of Christianity well considered, will give us great Light into the just Bounds and Extent of Christian Liberty. Of complying with the Customs of our Country, and the Will of our Governors. The great Difference between the Mosaical Law and the Gospel, as to its preceptive Part.

Seventhly, We may be greatly satisfied, by considering the *Design of Christianity*, concerning the *just Bounds and Extent of our Christian Liberty*. For that being to make Men *holy*, it may safely be presumed, that such things as have neither directly, nor consequentially, any Tendency to the depraving of our Souls, are left free to us by our Saviour, either to do them or not to do them, as we shall see Cause. Whatsoever neither promotes nor hinders *this Design*, we have Reason to believe is neither enjoined us Christians, nor forbidden us.

Whatever things are any way *necessary* to the furtherance of it, must needs be matter of strict Duty; and what are so profitable thereunto, that
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the Omission of them makes the effecting of this Design more difficult, cannot but be *ordinarily* so also. Whatsoever is *in its own Nature*, or by reason of some *Circumstance*, inseparably adhering to it, a necessary Occasion of gratifying some one or other corrupt Affection, and *that*, by the doing of which we shall *certainly* defile our own Souls, or the Souls of others, either by drawing them thereby to, or hardening and encouraging them in any Sin (which is that our Saviour means by *offending* or *scandalizing little ones*, and is so severely forbidden by him, and also by the Apostle in the eighth Chapter of the first Epistle to the *Corinthians*) can be no other than absolutely unlawful: and whatsoever is foreseen to be a *probable* Occasion of any one of these Mischiefs, must also be carefully avoided by us. But those things which are none of all these, cannot be otherwise than perfectly *indifferent* under the Gospel.

And therefore whatsoever of such are commended by the Custom of the Places we live in, or commanded by Superiors, or made by any Circumstance convenient to be done; our Christian Liberty consists in this, that we have Leave to do them. And, indeed, it is so far from being a Sin to comply with our Countrymen and Neighbours in their plainly innocent Usages and harmless Customs, or with the Will of our Governors when they command us such things; that it would be so, to refuse so to do. For our refusing to comply with either of these can hardly pro-

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Chap. X. *The Design of Christianity.* 205

ceed from any thing better than a proud Affectation of Singularity, or at best from superstitious Scrupulosity; which, in calling it *superstitious*, I intimate to be evil, as much of Conscience as there may be in it. For *Superstition* implies a frightful or over-timorous Apprehension of the Deity, and consequently an unworthy Conception thereof, as the *Greek Word* Δεισιδαιμονία signifieth. That which makes Men *superstitious*, is such an Opinion of God as represents him a very angry and captious Being, but yet such a one too as may be atoned and pacified by a great Care and Exactness in certain little Matters, in Performances and Abstinences of an insignificant and very trivial Nature.

Now the ancient Author of the Epistle to *Diognetus* acquaints him, that the *primitive Christians* were no such squeamish or conceited People, as to live in a different way from those among whom they inhabited; and says that they distinguished themselves from their Neighbours and other Folks, ὅτε φωνῇ, ὅτε ἔθει, *neither by civil Customs, nor a certain Language, (or Phrases or Tone) proper to themselves; nor that they affected to make themselves notified by any Peculiarities (that is, in harmless Matters) as a foolish Sect among ourselves, and some other fanciful People, now a-Days do.*

I design not here so tedious a Work, as that of examining Particulars by the Rule we have given, but only to shew in the general that we may be satisfied concerning the *Extent of our*

206 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. III.

Christian Liberty by well weighing the *Design of Christianity*, and may understand what kind of things must needs be free to us under the Gospel-dispensation, and what not; leaving it to the Reader to make Application, and consider the Nature of Particulars by comparing them with this Rule. But I presume I need not mind him; that I suppose all this while that whatsoever is plainly commanded and forbidden in the Gospel, must be done and forborne by him, though he should not be sagacious enough to discern how every thing there commanded is serviceable, or forbidden, is injurious, to the Design of Holiness: for surely none can doubt, but that they ought to understand me, in what I have asserted, to have this Meaning only, *viz.* That, as to those things which the Gospel speaks nothing in particular and clearly, concerning the best Course we can take in order to our knowing to what Heads to refer them (whether to that of things *commanded*, or to that of *forbidden*, or to that of *indifferent* things) is to examine them by this general Rule, *viz.* *The Design of Christianity.*

But to conclude this, The great Difference between the *Mosaical Law*, and the *Gospel*, as to its perceptive Part, is this, That by the *former* a vast Multitude of perfectly *indifferent* things were imposed, and many such also prohibited: but by the *latter*, only those things are enjoined that are in their own Nature of indispensable Necessity, or such as are Means and Helps towards them :

Chap. X. *The Design of Christianity.* 207

them ; and there is nothing thereby forbidden, but it is so, because it is Evil ; and is not therefore Evil only because forbidden. There is nothing either commanded or forbidden in our Saviour's Religion, but, as it is in order to our Good, so is it in order to *such* a Good too as consists in the Reformation and Renovation of our Lives and Natures.

So that, I say, our past Discourse concerning *the Design of Christianity* may give us great Light as to the Knowledge of what kind of things, we that are under the Gospel-dispensation, *must do*, and are Matter of *necessary Duty* ; *must not do*, and are Matter of Sin ; and *may do*, or *leave undone* without Sin.

CHAP.

C H A P. XI.

The Eighth Inference.

That it is the most unaccountable thing to do that which is essentially Evil, in Defence of the Christian Religion, or of any Opinions presumed to be Doctrines relating to it. The Pope and Church of Rome most highly guilty in this Particular. And not a few of those who profess Enmity against Popery too liable also to the same Charge.

Eighthly, It may be plainly inferred from what has been said of *the Design of Christianity*, *That it is the most strangely unaccountable thing for Men in Defence or Favour of that Way of Religion, which they take to be most truly the Christian, or of any Opinions that are presumed by them to be Doctrines belonging to it, to do that which is essentially, and in its own Nature evil.* For these act quite contrary to *the Design of the Christian Religion*, and so consequently, do what lies in them to spoil it, and render it a vain and insignificant thing by the Course they take for the Advancement of it. *The Pope and Church of Rome are horribly guilty of this Madness; they doing the most plainly vicious and immoral Actions imaginable,*

Chap. XI. *The Design of Christianity.* 209

ginable, to promote the Interest (as they pretend) of that which they call the *Catholick Faith*. For, their imposing of their own Senses upon the Word of God, and then persecuting, burning, and damning Men for not subscribing to *theirs* as to God's Words, can be no better than an Act of devilish Pride, and barbarous Cruelty. It is so of the former, in that it is a compelling Men to acknowledge their *Wisdom* to be such as may not be suspected in the least Measure, no not in the Determination of Points which are the most doubtful and disputable: nay, neither in such Opinions and Practices of theirs, as most plainly contradict Abundance of Texts of Holy Scripture.

And moreover, in endeavouring to force all Men to act and think as they do in Matters of Religion, they with *Luciferian* Arrogance usurp the Empire of Almighty God, and sway that Scepter over Men's Consciences which is *his peculiarly*.

And I need not say, that they are therein no whit less *cruel* than *proud*. For what greater Cruelty can there be, than to inflict upon People the saddest of Calamities and the horriddest Tortures (whereof the Instances are innumerable) for such things as they have no Cause to think they are able to help; and for which they have also the greatest Reason to conclude they are not at all Blame-worthy? I say, what can be greater Cruelty than this? except their designing thereby to

210 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. III.

terrify Men to the owning of Doctrines and doing Actions perfectly against the clearest Sense of their Minds, and most express Dictates of their Consciences; which is an Exercise of no less Cruelty towards their *Souls*, than the other is towards their *Bodies*.

And what Villanies have the Pope and his Party stuck at for the Propagation of their Religion? Such as exciting Subjects to take Arms against their lawful Sovereigns; poisoning and stabbing of Princes: the most barbarous Massacres that any History can give Account of. In short, what Frauds and Perfidiousness, what Treachery, what Impostures, what Perjuries, what Cruelties and horrid Outrages, have they thought too wicked to be undertaken and persisted in, for the Sake of HOLY CHURCH?

But I would I could say, that of all who are called Christians, the *Papists* only are liable to this Charge; but, alas, it is too manifest to be denied, or dissembled, that not a few of those who profess Enmity to Popery are sadly guilty, though not *equally* with the *Papists*, in this Particular. But there is nothing more self-evident than that to be of a persecuting Spirit, to be wrathful and furious, to backbite and slander, to be false and perfidious, to be ungovernable, to be uncharitable, or in any kind whatsoever unjust, upon any Account whatsoever, is most inexcusable and intolerable. For if upon any Account such things could be lawful, Religion would be
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Chap. XII. *The Design of Christianity.* 211

the most useless thing in the World; and if they were lawful upon the Account of Religion only, it would not be a more useless and unprofitable than a mischievous thing. And therefore it would be too little a thing to say, that the *Christian Religion* itself would be unworthy of our Esteem, as great things have been said of it, if it gave us Leave to allow ourselves in any Immorality.

But there are none, it more absolutely or with greater Severity forbids, than such as the fore-mentioned. *Who is a wise Man and indued with Knowledge among you, (says St. James) let him shew out of a good Conversation his Works with Meekness of Wisdom; but if ye have bitter Envyings and Strife in your Hearts, glory not, and lie not against the Truth, (that is, boast not of your Christian Wisdom, nor play the Hypocrites in pretending to be spiritual) this Wisdom descendeth not from above (is not Zeal kindled from Heaven) but is earthly, sensual, devilish: for where Envy and Strife is, there is Confusion and every evil Work. But the Wisdom that is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of Mercy and good Fruits, without Partiality, and without Hypocrisy: and the Fruit of Righteousness is sown in Peace, of them that make Peace, James iii. 13, to the End.*

And St. Paul tells the *Galatians*, Chap. iv. 22, 23. That the Fruit of the Spirit is Love, Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness, Temperance. And he reckons among

210 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. III.

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Chap. XII. *The Design of Christianity.* 211

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212 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. III.

the Works of the Flesh, *Verse* 19, 20, 21. not only *Adultery, Fornication, Uncleanneſs, Lasciviousneſs, Idolatry, Witchcraft, Hereſies, Murthers, Drunkenneſs, Revelling* : but alſo, *Hatred, Variance, Emulations, Wrath, Strife, Seditions, Envyings* : and ſays, *that they which do ſuch things (ſuch as theſe as well as the former) ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God.* And adds, *Verse* 24. *that They which are Chriſt's, have crucified the Fleſh with the Affections and Luſts, that is, the foregoing, and all other.*

And it appears from what has been ſaid of the *Design of Chriſtianity*, that the Gratification of any of theſe Affections is ſo far from becoming lawful, or more warrantable, by being yielded to for the Sake thereof, that it is rendered the more wretchedly fooliſh, and unaccountable by this means. For thus to do, is to be *irreligious* to promote *Religion*, to be *Unchriſtian* to do Service to *Chriſtianity* ; and therefore to go the direſteſt way to *deſtroy it*, by the Means we uſe for its *Preſervation*. And we do our particular Opinions and Forms of Religion more Miſchief, in alienating the Minds of others from them, by ſuch wild Expreſſions of Zeal, than their Adverſaries will be able to do, by all their Attempts againſt them. And laſtly, thus to do is to oppoſe the Intereſt of our *Religion* to that of our *Souls*, and to caſt *theſe* away in the Defence of *that* : as appears from our Diſcourſe in the ſecond Section. But what Madneſs is like to this ?

C H A P.

C H A P. XII.

The Ninth Inference.

That it is a most unwarrantable thing for the Ministers of Christ to prefer any other Design before that of making Men really righteous and holy. That this ought to be the whole Design of their preaching. That it is of as great Concernment that they promote the same Business by their Conversations, as that they do it by their Doctrine. Infinite Mischiefs occasioned by the loose Lives of Ministers. Several Instances of Practices extremely blame-worthy in Preachers of the Gospel. That they ought to have a Regard to the Weaknesses of Persons so far as lawfully they may. That the promoting of Holiness ought to be the only Design of ecclesiastical Discipline.

Ninthly, Seeing our Saviour's grand Design was to make Men really righteous and holy, it must needs be a most unwarrantable thing for those that are his Ministers to prefer any other before this ; for those that are intrusted with the Care

214 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. III.

of Souls to concern themselves about any thing so much as this.

It is plainly their Duty to subordinate every thing they do, by virtue of their sacred Function, to this; and to imitate their great Master, all they can, in the Discharge of it; to promote *Holiness*, as much as lies in them, both by their Doctrine and Conversations: with all Perspicuity and Plainness to instruct their People in the indisputable Doctrines of Christianity above any other; and to have a special Care to shew them the Aptness that is in them, to the Furtherance of Holiness of Heart and Life: and most to inculcate those upon them which have the greatest and most manifest and immediate Tendency to it: to inform them of their whole Duty relating to God, their Neighbour, and themselves impartially; to press them to the Performance of them with the greatest Affection and Fervency; and to back on their Exhortations with the most prevalent and inforcing Motives; the most rational and convincing Arguments; courageously, but with a Discovery of tenderest Compassion to Sinners, to reprove all Sins without Exception; and faithfully to shew the Danger of living in any one whatsoever. And to do thus, not only in *publick*, but, as there is Occasion, in *private* also, and readily to embrace all Opportunities for that Purpose.

Thus (as has been shewn) our Blessed *Saviour* spent his Time, and that it is the Duty of his Ministers

Chap. XII. *The Design of Christianity.* 215

nisters to come as near as they can, in their Practice, to him, is out of Question: and thus also did his immediate Successors, the Apostles, employ themselves; as might be largely made to appear. They preached the Word, were *instant both in Season and out of Season, they reproved, rebuked and exhorted with all Long-suffering and Doctrine*; according as St. Paul charged Timothy to do, in the most solemn and severe manner: even *before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the Quick and the Dead, at his appearing and his Kingdom*. And that Charge, by Parity of Reason, must concern the whole Clergy as well as that Bishop.

And as Christ and his Apostles taught Men by their *Lives*, as well as *Doctrine*, and encouraged them to the Performance of whatsoever Duties they enjoined them, by their own Example; so it cannot but be of infinite Concernment that all who have the Conduct of Souls committed to them should do the like, St. Paul exhorted Timothy ^e first to take Heed to himself, and then to the *Doctrine*; and the former Advice was of no whit less Necessity and Importance than was the latter. For (as woeful Experience assures us) a Minister of a careless and loose Life, let his Parts and Ability in preaching be never so great, nay, though he should behave himself never so faithfully in the Pulpit, and be zealous against

^e 1 Tim. iv. 16,

236 *The Design of Christianity.* II Sect. III.
the very Vices he himself is guilty of (which
would be very strange if he should) must needs
do more *Hurt* incomparably, than he can do
Good. And though (as some of them will tell
them) it is the People's Duty to do as they *say*,
and not as they *do*; yet is there nothing more
impossible than to teach them effectually that
Lesson. Mankind (as we had before Occasion
to shew) is mightily addicted to Imitation, and *Ex-*
amples (especially those of Governors and Teach-
ers) have a greater Force upon People ordinarily
than *Instructions* have; but chiefly *bad Examples*
(in regard of their natural Proneness to Vice)
than *good Instructions*. Had not the Apostles ex-
pressed as great a Care of what they *did*, as of
what they *said*, how they *lived* as how they
preached, Christianity would (without doubt)
have been so far from prevailing and getting
Ground as it has done; that it could not have
long survived its Blessed Author, if it had not bid
adieu to the World with him. Most Men, do
what we can, will judge of our Sermons by our
Conversations, and if they see *these* bad, they
will not think *those* good; nor the Doctrines
contained in them practicable, seeing they have
no better Effect upon those who preach them.
And besides, no Man will be thought to be seri-
ous and in good earnest in pressing those Duties
upon others, which he makes no Conscience of
performing himself.

Nay,

Chap. XII. *The Design of Christianity.* 217

Nay, every Man's Judgment in divine things may warrantably be suspected; that is, of a wicked and vicious Life. And those who are conscious to themselves that they are not able to pass a Judgment upon Doctrines, may not be blamed if they question their Minister's Orthodoxy, while they observe in him any kind of Immorality, and see that he lives to the Satisfaction of any one Lust. For, the Promise of *knowing the Truth* is made only to such as *continue in Christ's Words*, that is, who are obedient to his Precepts.

And I add, that such a one's Talk of Heaven and Hell, are like to prevail very little upon his Auditors, or to be at all heeded by the greatest Part of them, while they consider that the Preacher has a Soul to save as well as they. And therefore the Love which they bear to their Lusts, with the Devil's Help, will easily persuade them, that either these things are but mere Fictions or else that the one may be obtained, and the other escaped, upon far easier Terms than he talks of. But as for those few in whom the Sense of true Virtue and Piety have made so deep an Impression, as that they have never the slightest Opinion of the Necessity of it, in regard of their Minister's wicked Example; the Prejudice that they cannot but conceive against him, renders his Discourses insipid and uninteresting to them, and so they ordinarily take all Opportunities to turn their Backs upon him, and at length quite forsake him. And then, if they are not as *under-*
standing

218: *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. III.

standing as well meaning People, are too easily drawn away from all other Churches, when they have left their own, and become a Prey to some demure, and fairly-pretending Sectary. And I am very certain from my own Observation, that no one thing hath so conduced to the Prejudice of our Church, and done the separating Parties so much Service as the scandalous Lives of some who exercise the ministerial Function amongst us. The late excellent Bishop of Downe and Connor has this memorable Passage in a Sermon he preached to the University at Dublin: If ye become burning and shining Lights, if ye do not detain the Truth in Unrighteousness, if ye walk in Light and live in the Spirit, your Doctrine will be true, and that Truth will prevail: but if you live wickedly and scandalously, every little Schismatick will put you to Shame, and draw Disciples after him, and abuse your Flocks, and feed them with Colocynths and Hemlock, and place Heresy in the Chair appointed for your Religion. But to hasten to the Dispatch of this unpleasant Topick: wicked Ministers are of all other Ill-livers the most scandalous, for they lay the greatest Stumbling-block, of any whatsoever, before Men's Souls; and what our Saviour said of the Scribes and Pharisees, may in an especial Manner be applied to them, viz. that they will neither enter into Heaven themselves, nor yet suffer them that are entering to go in: so far are they from saving themselves and those that hear them. But I would to God, such would
well

Chap. XII. *The Design of Christianity.* 219

well lay to Heart those alarming Words of our Saviour, *Luke xvii. 1, 2.* *It is impossible but that Offences will come; but woe unto him through whom they come: it were better for him that a Millstone were hanged about his Neck, and he cast into the Sea, &c.* And those Words are not more effectual to scare them, than are these following of Tully, though a Heathen, concerning vicious Philosophers, to shame them into a better Life: he says in his *Tusculan Questions*, the second Book, *Quotusquisque Philosophorum invenitur, qui sit ita moratus, &c.* What one of many Philosophers is there, who so behaves himself, and is of such a Mind and Life, as Reason requires; which accounts his Doctrine not a Boast of Science but a Law of Life; which obeys himself, and is governed by his own Precepts? We may see some so light and vain, that it would have been better for them to be wholly ignorant, and never to have learned any thing: others so covetous of Money, thirsty of Praise and Honour, and many such Slaves to their Lusts, ut cum eorum vitâ mirabiliter pugnet oratio, That their Lives marvellously contradict their Doctrine. Quod quidem mihi videtur esse turpissimum, &c. Which to me seems the most filthy and abominable thing. For as he which professing himself a Grammarian speaks barbarously, and who being desirous to be accounted a Musician sings out of Tune, is so much the more Shame-worthy for his being defective in that the Knowledge and Skill of which he arrogates to himself; so a Philosopher in ratione vitæ peccans,

220 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. III.

peccans, *miscarrying in his Manners, is in this Respect the baser and more wretched Creature, that in the Office of which he will needs be a Master, he does amiss; artemque vitæ professus delinquit in vitâ, and professing the Art of well-living, or of teaching others to live well, is faulty, and miscarries in his own Life.* Could this excellent Heathen thus inveigh against wicked Philosophers, what Satyr can be tart and severe enough for ungodly Ministers of the glorious and most holy Gospel of the blessed Jesus? I will add one more Saying of our Saviour's, which he spake to his Disciples, whom he was training up for the Ministry, *Matt. v. 13. Ye are the Salt of the Earth; but if the Salt hath lost its Savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under Foot of Men.*

Well, I say that the Design of our Saviour and his Gospel being to make Men holy, those behave themselves infinitely unbecoming his Ministers and the Preachers of the Gospel, who live unholily; and so do all such also (as was at first intimated) as do not above all things endeavour the promoting and furtherance of that Design. And of that Number are those who are ever affecting to make People stare at their high-flown and bombast Language, or to please their Fancies with foolish Jingles, and pedantick boyish Wit, or to be admired for their Ability in dividing a Hair, their *metaphysical* Acuteness, and scholastick Sub-

Chap. XII. *The Design of Christianity.* 221

Subtily; or be for their doughty Dexterity in controversial Squabble. And among such may those also, and those *chiefly*, be reckoned, who seek to approve themselves to their Auditors to be Men of Mysteries, and endeavour to make the plain and easy Doctrines of the Gospel as intricate and obscure as ever they are able: these are so far from endeavouring above all things to advance the *Design of the Gospel*, that it has not any greater Enemies in the whole World than they are. And to them I may add such as preach up *Free Grace* and *Christian Privileges*, otherwise than as Motives to excite to Obedience, and never scarcely insist upon any *Duties* except those of believing, laying hold on Christ's Righteousness, applying the Promises (which are all really the same with *them*) and renouncing our own Righteousness, for which those who have none at all to renounce have a mighty Kindness. All which rightly understood, may, I grant, and ought to be preached; but to make the Christian's Duty to consist either wholly, or mostly in those Particulars, and especially as they are explained by not a few, is the way effectually to harden Hypocrites, and increase their Number, but to make no sincere Converts.

Those again do nothing less than chiefly promote the *Business of Holiness*, who are never in their Element, but when they are talking of the Irrespectiveness of God's Decrees, the Absoluteness of his Promises, the utter Disability and perfect

222 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. III.

fect Impotence of natural Men to do any thing towards their own Conversion, &c. and insist with greatest Emphasis and Vehemence upon such like false and dangerous Opinions. And those may well accompany and be joined with the foregoing, who are of such *narrow*, and therefore *unchristian* Spirits, as to make it their great Business to advance the petty Interest of any Party whatsoever, and concern themselves more about doing this, than about promoting and carrying on that wherein consists the chief good of all Mankind; and are more zealous to make Profelytes to their particular Sects than Converts to a holy Life; and press more exact and rigid Conformity to their Modes, than to the Laws of God, and the essential Duties of the Christian Religion.

Such as all the forementioned have, doubtless, little Cause to expect a *well done good and faithful Servant*, from the Mouth of their Saviour at the last Day; their Practice being so very contrary to that of his (whose Ministers they profess themselves to be) when he was in the World; and they making Christianity so perfectly different a thing from what *he* made it.

And furthermore, it is unquestionably the Duty of all the Stewards of the Mysteries of God to take special Heed that they do not by over-severely insisting on any little Matters, and unnecessary things, give their People a Temptation to conclude that they lay the greatest Weight

upon

Chap. XII. *The Design of Christianity.* 223

upon them; but so to behave themselves towards them, as to give them Assurance that there is no Interest so dear to them as is that of the Salvation of their Souls. And lastly, to be so self-denying as to have a Regard to the Weaknesses of Persons, so far as lawfully, and without disobeying Authority they may, to prevent their Departure from Communion with the Church they belong to; and to use all fair and prudent Ways to persuade those back again to it, which there is any the least Reason to hope are not irrecoverably gone away. It being very much the Interest of their Souls not to continue in Separation; and not of *theirs* only but of *others* too, in that Strifes and Contentions, Envyings and Animosities are like to be kept alive, and greatly to encrease, while Men keep at a Distance from one another; and where these are (as it was said St. James has told us) there must needs be *Confusion and every evil Work.*

And this is no other than what the great St. Paul thought it no Disparagement to him to be exemplary to us in. For, says he, 1 Cor. ix. 19, &c. *Though I be free from all Men, yet have I made myself a Servant to all, that I might gain the more: and unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the Law as under the Law, that I might gain them that are under the Law; to them that are without Law (or observe not the Law of Moses,) as without Law, that I might gain them that are without Law:*

224 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. III.

to the Weak became I as weak, that I might gain the Weak; I am made all things to all Men, that I might by all means save some. The Sum of which Words amounts to this, That he denied himself in the Use of his Liberty to gain those who were not acquainted with the Extent of it, and dealt with all Sorts of Men in that way which he thought most probable to convert them to Christianity, and keep them in the Profession of it. Not that he sneaked and dissembled, and made weak People think he was of their Mind, and so confirmed them in their Mistakes and Follies; or had any Regard to the Humours of unreasonable merely captious People, who will be finding Faults upon no Ground at all: this must needs be unworthy of an Apostle; for it is so of all inferior Ministers, and of every private Christian too.

And our past Discourse assures us also, that the promoting of Holiness in Men's Hearts and Lives ought to be the only Design of ecclesiastical Discipline and Church Censures: and it is easy to shew, that if the Laws of all Christian Churches were framed, and the Execution of them directed *only*, or *above any other*, to the Service of this Design; or that no Interest sway'd so much with their chief Governors, as that which was (and still is) most dear to the Great Founder and King of the Church whom they represent; and if they were willing to lose in their little and *petty* Concerns, that they might gain

Chap. XIII. *The Design of Christianity.* 225
gain in this grand one, we should quickly see
Christendom in most lovely and blessed Circum-
stances. All People who have any thing of Sin-
cerity, would quickly unite and agree together,
and as for factious Hypocrites, they would be
with Ease suppress'd, and put out of all Capa-
city of doing Mischief. This, I say, might be
easily shewn, and plainly demonstrated; but 'tis
needless, as there is nothing in the World more
undeniably evident.

C H A P. XIII.

The Tenth Inference.

*That an obedient Temper of Mind is an ex-
cellent and necessary Qualification to pre-
pare Men for a firm Belief and right Un-
derstanding of the Gospel. That it is so
by virtue of Christ's Promise. That it
is so in its own Nature. This shewed in
three Particulars, viz. in that, 1. It
will help us to judge without Prejudice
concerning the Doctrines contained in
the Gospel. 2. It will give Satisfaction
concerning the main Doctrines of Christi-
anity far excelling any that can arise from*
Q *mere*

226 *The Design of Christianity. Sect. III.*
mere Speculation. 3. It will secure from
the Causes of Error in those Points which
are of weightiest Importance. Six Causes
of such Errors laid down; and an obedient
Disposition of Mind shewed to secure from
each of them.

TENTHLY, *We learn what is the best Temper and*
Disposition of Mind to bring to the Study of
Christ's Gospel, in order to our firm Belief and right
Understanding of it. Seeing its Design is to make
Men entirely obedient, and truly holy, it is evident
that a Desire so to be is the most excellent and
necessary Qualification for that Purpose. Our
Saviour says, John vii. 17. If any Man will do
his Will (or is willing to do it) he shall know of
the Doctrine whether it be of God, or whether I
speak of myself; that is, in the first Place, he shall
be thoroughly satisfied concerning the Truth of
the Gospel, shall be abundantly convinced that
the Christian Religion is no Imposture, that the
Author of it came from Heaven, as he declared
he did, and was sent by God to reveal his Will.
Such a one, when it comes to be sufficiently pro-
posed to him, shall heartily embrace the Gospel
as containing the true, the only true Religion.
And therefore observe what he says, John viii. 47.
He that is of God, heareth God's Words; ye there-
fore hear them not, because ye are not of God; that
is, as if he should say, He who is of an obedient
Temper,

Chap. XIII. *The Design of Christianity.* 227

Temper, and ambitious of doing the Will of God, shall receive the Doctrine which in his Name I preach to him; and the Reason why you *Jews*, for your Parts, refuse so to do, is, because you are insincere and hypocritical.

It is said, *Acts* xiii. 48, that as many of the Gentiles as were *εὐαγγελισμένοι*, (which is doubtless in this Place to be rendered) *disposed*, or in a ready *Preparedness for eternal Life, believed*; that is, Those which were *Profelytes of the Gate*, who were admitted by the *Jews* to the Hope of eternal Life, and to have their Portion in the Age to come, without submitting to their whole Law, or any more than owning the God of *Israel*, and observing the *seven Precepts of Noah* (as Master *Mede* has learnedly shewn,) these being desirous to live godlily, and not prejudiced against the Christian Religion, as the *Jews* generally were, did then at *Antioch* receive the Gospel upon its first being made known to them. And of this Sort was *Cornelius*, of whose Conversion to Christianity we read before, in Sect. II. Chap. II.

Secondly, and consequently, this Sense is also implied in the first cited Words of our Saviour, *viz.* That, as he which is willing to do God's Will, shall know that Christ's Doctrine came from him, so he shall rightly understand that Doctrine too. For it would be to no Purpose for him to believe the Gospel to be true, if his Faith be not accompanied with an Ability to pass a

228 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. III.

right Judgment on the Sense of it. And therefore he must needs be able to distinguish between the Doctrine of Christ, and that which is falsely imposed at any time upon the World, as his, and fathered upon him by ungodly Hereticks; as well as satisfied that what he delivered in the general is the Will of God. St. *John* to this same Purpose expresses himself, 1 Epistle iv. 6. *He that knoweth God* (that is, practically, or is obedient) *heareth us; he that is not of God* (or is not willing to obey him) *heareth not us; hereby know we the Spirit of Truth and the Spirit of Error*: that is, by this obedient Temper we are capable of distinguishing betwixt these two Spirits. And, I say, from the *Design of the Gospel*, that being to make Men *holy*, it may be presumed, that whosoever considers it with a Desire of being so, must needs both believe it to have come from God, and also be enlightened in the true Knowledge of, at least, all the necessary Points of it; and be enabled to give a particular, explicit, and understanding Assent to them: so that it shall not lie in the Power of any subtile Seducer to rob him of his Faith, or to infect him with any Principles that are directly destructive to it, or are so plainly in their Consequences so, as that he shall see it, and make that ill Use of them as to be persuaded by them to let go his Hold of any fundamental Article of the Christian Religion.

For

Chap. XIII. *The Design of Christianity.* 229

For our Saviour having so concerned himself for the destroying of Sin in us, and to make us Partakers of his Holiness, as to aim at this above all things, in all he did and suffered in the World, and to make it the whole Business of his Gospel; we may be certain that those *honest* Souls that come to the Study of it, with a Desire of reaping *this* Advantage by it, cannot be left destitute of Christ's Grace and Blessing to make it successful to them for that Purpose; which it is impossible it should be without a thorough Belief of it, and a right understanding of, at least, all its absolutely necessary and essential Parts. This we might be assured of from that Consideration, though there were no Promise extant of that his Grace to such well-disposed People, as there are divers others besides that which we have produced.

But besides this, a sincere Desire of being obedient and holy, must needs *of itself* very greatly dispose us for the Belief and sufficient understanding of the Gospel, and be very necessary in order thereunto also. For,

First, It will help us to judge without Prejudice concerning it, and the particular Doctrines therein contained. He whose hearty Desire it is to please God in doing his Will, will be unbiassed in his Judgment in Enquiries after it. He knows that he cannot make that to be Truth by thinking one way or other, which was not *before* so; and that Truth will be Truth whatsoever he

thinks of it: and therefore wishes not that this or that *may be* so, and then endeavours to persuade himself that it *is* so; but will only examine what *is* so, that he may not entertain an erroneous Persuasion. He will bring his Mind to the Gospel, and not wrest the Gospel to his Mind. But Vice and Sin, being allowed and predominant in the Soul, must needs warp the Judgment, and clap a heavy Bias on it, that will draw it to Favour, as much as may be, their Interest in all Matters it is concerned in. And therefore a Man of wicked and depraved Affections, cannot but be exceeding unapt to study a Book whose Design is such as the Gospel's is. But the obediently disposed will bring free, ingenuous, and candid Spirits to this Work, and therefore are very fitly prepared to do it with good Success.

Secondly, This honest and sincere Temper of Mind will help a Man to evidence for his Satisfaction concerning the main Doctrines of the Gospel, far excelling any that can arise from mere Speculation; namely, that of *Sense* and *Experience*. The Man who is endued with it, shall *know of the Doctrine, that it is of God*, he shall not only believe it according to the strict Notion of that Phrase. There is an inward Sweetness in holy Truths that a good Soul will relish and favour, but the vitiated Palates of those that are in Love with any Lust cannot taste it. *How sweet (said David) are thy Words unto my Taste, yea, sweeter than Honey unto my Mouth.* Now naked
Demon-

Chap. XIII. *The Design of Christianity.* 231

Demonstrations give but very poor and slight Satisfaction in comparison of that Knowledge which arises from *Sense and Experience*; and this latter alone will remove us from all Doubt and Uncertainty. Therefore that was so far from being a weak and foolish, that it was a most worthy and laudable Speech of the honest Martyr^r, *Though I cannot dispute, I can die for Christ.* No one who has tasted Honey, can at all doubt of its Sweetness, though he may want Cunning enough to answer the Arguments whereby a Sophister may attempt to prove it bitter. We say, *seeing is believing.* And the great Evidence that our Saviour proved himself to be the *Messias* by, was that of *Sense.* By this was *Thomas* his Incredulity, (very strong as it was) immediately overcome. And the *bodily Senses* are not more infallible than is the *purified Sense of the Soul.*

Thirdly, The aforesaid Temper of Mind will secure, from the Causes of Error, in those Points which are of weightiest Importance. It is certain that Mistakes about these cannot possibly arise from the Obscurity of that Book, it being as plain as Heart can wish in all Matters of absolute Necessity; as hath been shewn in my Book intitled the *Principles and Practices of certain moderate Divines.* Therefore Errors which are of a damnable Nature must necessarily proceed from *vicious Causes*, such as,

^r Bishop Latimer.

232 *The Design of Christianity.* || Sect. III.

1. *Gross Ignorance* : but it is not possible to find this in any Soul, sincerely desirous to obey God.

2. *A too high Opinion of our Parts and Reason* : by which is often occasioned a Rejection of whatsoever they are not able to comprehend. But the honest and humble Soul can have no such Conceits of *his* Reason ; he knows nothing more undoubtedly than that he is a weak and shallow Creature. He knows that the most contemptible Insect, and common Weed, are able to pose and put him to a *non plus* ; and that it would therefore be the highest of Arrogances in him to believe nothing revealed to him, but what is an adequate Object of his Understanding. This Man will submit his Reason to divine Revelation, and not divine Revelation to his Reason. 'Tis true he cannot, though he would never so fain, believe that which manifestly *contradicts* the Reason of his Mind, and the innate Sense of his Soul ; but therefore it is certain that no such things are to be found in the Gospel, nor can be a Matter of divine Revelation.

3. *Proud Affectation of being thought wiser than others*. This was the great thing which made the first Hereticks which the Church of Christ ever knew : as appears by the arrogant Title they assume to them'selves, distinguishing their Sect by the Name of *Gnosticks*. But that Temper of Mind which makes Men unfeignedly desirous of Piety and Virtue, is inconsistent with all such ambitious and aspiring Thoughts.

4. *Liquorish*

Chap. XIII. *The Design of Christianity.* 233

4. *Liquorish Curiosity and Wantonness of Spirit.*

When People are gluttet with those wholesome Truths with which they have for many Years been entertained, and will be hunting after Novelties; when they grow weary of their honest Teachers, and will be following every Upstart that sets himself in Opposition to them; it can hardly otherwise be but that they must fall into dangerous Errors. The Apostle saith, 2 Tim. iv. 3. that, *The Time will come when they will not endure sound Doctrine, but after their own Lusts will they heap to themselves Teachers:* (but how comes it to pass that they will do thus? it follows) *having itching Ears.* But the obediently-inclined Soul will be careful to keep in that good Way, which by Experience he has found to be so, and to avoid all By-paths. Nor will he be running after Seducers, but shun them all he can, as being conscious of his own Weakness, and his Aptness without the Grace of God to be misled.

5. *The Love of, and being wedded to any one Lust whatsoever, will certainly endanger Men's falling into the worst of Heresies.* When Men have some beloved Sins or Sin, with which they are resolved they will not part, and are as a *Right Eye* or *Right Hand* ² to them, they are easily persuaded to entertain such Principles as will allow them to live in them, and to abandon those as will not; and therefore to *wrest the Scriptures*

² Mat. v. 29, 30.

234 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. III.

(as those the Apostle speaks of, 2 Pet. iii. 16) to *their own Destruction*, and put them upon the Rack to make them speak such things as may consist with the Interest of their corrupt Appetites. *Quod volumus facile credimus*, that which we would have to be true, we easily believe is so; and what we desire should be false, we are with little Difficulty persuaded to disbelieve. This, therefore, has had so fearful an Influence on not a few, as to cause them at length to throw away their BIBLES, to deny the Immortality of their Souls, and disbelieve as much as they can even the *Being* of a Deity, because they are sensible that while they continue in their Sins, it is infinitely their Interest that the Holy Scriptures should be false, that there should be no other Life, and no God. But I need not say, that the honest obedient Person is one that is not devoted to any Lust.

6. *The just Judgment of God upon these and the like Accounts*, is the last Cause I shall mention of Men's disbelieving the Gospel, and renouncing any of the Essentials of Christianity. *Even as they did not like to retain God in their Knowledge*, (that is, to acknowledge him in their Practice) *God gave them up to a reprobate* (or an adulterate, corrupted) *Mind*, Rom. i. 28. *Because they received not the Love of the Truth, that they might be saved; God shall send them strong Delusion, that they should believe a Lye; that they all might be damned who believed not the Truth, but*
had

Chap. XIII. *The Design of Christianity.* 235

had Pleasure in Unrighteousness, 2 Theff. ii. 10. The forementioned Particulars do of themselves lead to the most dangerous Errors, how much more then must they needs so do, when they are backed with the divine Vengeance? But if *Honesty* and an *obedient Temper* of Soul will secure from the *other* Causes of Error and Seduction, it will, in so doing, secure from *this last*.

So that it is manifest that a sincere Desire of Righteousness and true Holiness, will not fail to help Men to a thorough Belief, and sufficient understanding of that Book which is only designed to indue them with it: and that nothing can occasion the contrary, but a wilful adhering to some one or other Immorality; and that this hath a very great Aptness so to do. So that it is not the least Matter of Wonder, to see Men of excellent Wits, and brave Accomplishments, either fall into gross Errors, or even into a flat Disbelief of the Christian Religion. As strange as this may seem to some, it appears from our past Discourse, that there is not any real Cause of Admiration in it. For other Endowments, of as excellent Use as they may be when accompanied with that of an obedient Temper, must needs do more Hurt than Good to the Souls that are adorned with them, when separated from it, and occasion those Vices that may well make way for Heresies. And it is certain that an acute Wit, when it has not a purified Sense going along with it, is so far from being a sufficient Prerequisite to the
right

236 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. III.

right understanding of evangelical Truths, that it is as notable an Engine as the grand Deceiver can desire to make use of, in order to the bringing about his mischievous Designs upon the Person that is Master of it. So that indeed, it is on the contrary, rather Matter of Wonder, that any Man that has a naughty *Will*, should have a good *Judgment* in evangelical Truths, though both his natural and acquired Parts should be never so great. And again, we may without the least Breach of Charity presume, that whosoever, to whom Christianity is sufficiently made known, either disbelieves it, or any of the Fundamentals of it, his *Heart* is much more in Fault than his *Head*, and that he has darkened his discerning Faculty, and greatly dimmed the Eye of his Soul, by entertaining some filthy Lust that sends up a thick Fog and Mist of Vapours to it. *If any Man teach otherwise* (says St. Paul, 1 Tim. vi. 6.) *and consent not to wholesome Words, even the Words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the Doctrine that is according to Godliness; he is proud, &c.* not he is weak and cannot, but he is wicked and will not understand the Truth. And, by the way, this Discourse may conduce to the no small Encouragement of the weaker Sort: let such be but heartily solicitous about doing God's Will, and having the Design of the Gospel effected in them, and they need not fear that their Weakness will betray them into the wrong Way to Blessedness.

C A A P. XIV.

The Last Inference.

That we are taught by the Design of Christianity, wherein the Essence, Power and Life of it consists. Instances in what kind of things it consists not. For what Ends the several Exercises of Piety and Devotion are enjoined. How God is glorified by Men, and by what Means. Whom it is our Duty to esteem, and carry ourselves towards, as true Christians. That by following the Example of Christ, and making his Life our Pattern, we shall assure ourselves that the Design of Christianity is effected in us, and that we are endued with its Power.

L Astly, We learn from the Doctrine of the Design of Christianity, wherein the Essence, Power and Life of it consists, viz. In a good State and Habit of Mind, in a holy Frame and Temper of Soul; whereby it esteems God as the chiefest Good, prefers him and his Son Jesus before all the World, and prizes above all things an Interest in the divine Perfections; such as Justice
and

238 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. III.

and *Righteousness*, *universal Charity*, *Goodness*, *Mercy* and *Patience*, and *all Kinds of Purity*. From whence naturally proceeds a hearty Compliance with all the holy Precepts of the Gospel; and sincere Endeavours to perform all those Actions which are agreeable to them, are necessary Expressions of those and the like Virtues, and Means for the obtaining and Increase of them; and to avoid the contrary.

The Kingdom of God (or Christianity) is not Meat and Drink, but Righteousness, Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost; as St. Paul tells us, Rom. xiv. 17. That is, it consists not in any merely external Matters, or bodily Exercises, which (elsewhere he says) do profit but little^h. And, not in such as he there means, viz. things of an indifferent Nature, and neither Good nor Evil; so neither in such as are very good and laudable for the Matter of them. It is only their flowing from an inward Principle of Holiness, that denominates any whatsoever Christian Actions. But such as are only occasioned by certain external Inducements and Motives, and proceed not from any good Temper and Disposition of Mind, be they never so commendable in themselves, speak not him who performs them a true and sincere Christian. He is not a Jew, says the same Apostle, that is one outwardly, neither is that Circumcision that is outward in the Flesh: but he is a Jew, that

^h 1 Tim. iv. 8.

Chap. XIV. *The Design of Christianity.* 239
is one inwardly; and Circumcision is that of the Heart, in the Spirit, and not in the Letter, whose Praise is not of Men but of God, Rom. ii. 28, 29. That is, he only is a true Child of Abraham, who in the Purity of the Heart obeys those substantial Laws which are imposed by God upon him. And if no one that does not thus, might properly be called a Jew, or Child of Abraham, much less can the Name of a Christian and a Disciple of the holy Jesus be due to him. He (it is evident) is only so, in whom the Design of Christianity is in some measure accomplished. And it appears from what has been said, that its Design is primarily and immediately upon the Nature; which, being rectified and renewed, will certainly discover itself so to be throughout the whole Life. For a good Tree will not bring forth corrupt Fruit, nor a corrupt Tree good Fruit, as our Saviour has said¹. Were it possible (as it is not) that we should forbear all outward Acts of Sin, and yet our Souls cleave to it, we could not but be destitute of the Life and Power of Christianity. And should we abound never so much in the Exercise of good Duties, if our Design in so doing be to gratify any Lust, and serve some carnal Interest, they will be so far from Christian Actions, that they may be most truly and properly called Sins. There is no one Duty more affectionately recommended in the Gospel than is Alms-giving;

¹ Mat. vii.

240 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. III.

but to give Alms to be seen and praised by Men, is no better than base Hypocrisy (as Christ has told us) so far is it from an Expression of *Christian* Charity. And whatsoever *materially* virtuous Actions proceed not from the Principle of Love to Virtue, though I cannot say that all such are hateful to God, yet they want that Degree of Perfection that is requisite to make them *truly Christian*. And it is a plain Case, that he is not the Christian, who is much employed in the Duties of Prayer, hearing God's Word, reading the Bible and other good Books, &c. but he who discovers a good Mind in them, in whom the *End* of them is effected, and who is the *better* for them. This is the Business for the sake of which *Prayer* is enjoined. We are therein to acknowledge God's infinite Perfections, and our Obligations to him, that we may express our hearty Sense of them, and in order to our being the more affected with *those*, and our having the more grateful Resentments of *these*. We are in that Duty to address ourselves to the divine Majesty, in the Name of Christ, for what we want; that we may by this Means both express and encrease our Dependance on him, and trust in him for the obtaining of it. And to confess and bewail our Sins, to exercise Godly Sorrow and Contrition of Soul; and that by so doing we may be so much the more deeply humbled for them, and have the greater Averseness in our Wills against them. The Communion which
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Chap. XIV. *The Design of Christianity.* 241

we are to enjoy with God in Prayer, is such as consists in being enamoured with the Excellencies which are in him, and in receiving Communications of his Nature and Spirit from him.

Therefore also are we commanded to hear and read God's Word, that we may come thereby to understand, and be put in mind of the several Duties he requires of us, and be powerfully moved to the doing of them.

And the like may be said concerning all the other Exercises of Piety and Devotion, the *End* of them is more and more to dispose our Hearts to the Love, and our Wills to the Obedience of our blessed Creator and Redeemer. And busying ourselves in any of them without *this Design*, may well be counted in the Number of the fruitless and unaccountable Actions of our Lives. To do thus is prodigally to waste and mispend our Time; as the *Jews* were upbraided by one of their Adversaries, with doing, upon the Account of their *Sabbath*, saying, *That they lost one Day in seven.* And those who are most constant in their Addresses to the Majesty of Heaven, both in the publick and private Worship of him, if they go into his Presence with the Entertainment and Allowance of any sinful Affection, they have never the more of the divine Approbation upon that Account. *If I regard*, says David, *Iniquity in my Heart, the Lord will not bear me.* God esteems no better of such as do so, than as hypocritical Fawners upon him, and false-hearted Compli-

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242 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. III.

menters of him ; and has declared that their Sacrifices are an *Abomination* to him. The Generality of the *Jews* were such a People : God by his Prophet *Isaiah* speaks thus concerning them, *They seek me daily, and delight to know my Ways, as a Nation that did Righteousness, and forsook not the Ordinance of their God. They ask of me the Ordinances of Justice, they take Delight in approaching to God.* They were a People that loved to fast and pray, and afflict their Souls, and to make their Voice to be heard on high : but giving Liberty to themselves in plain Immoralities, God declared that all this was even hateful to him : as may be seen in the fifty-eighth of *Isaiah*. And he there likewise tells them, that the *Fast which he took Pleasure in*, consists in *loosing the Bands of Wickedness, in undoing the heavy Burthens ; and letting the Oppressed go free ; in breaking every Yoke ; in dealing their Bread to the Hungry ; and bringing the Poor that are cast out to their Houses ; in covering the Naked ; and the Exercise of strict Justice, Mercy, and Kindness.* And in the first Chapter, he asks them, *To what Purpose the Multitude of their Sacrifices were* (though they were no other than he himself by the Law of *Moses* required) and charged them to bring no more vain Oblations to him ; told them that their *Incense was an Abomination to him, their new Moons and Sabbaths, and calling of Assemblies he could not away with, that their solemn Assembly was Iniquity, that their new Moons and appointed Feasts his Soul hated, and that he was weary to bear them.* And all this because these

Chap. XIV. *The Design of Christianity.* 243

these were the only or main things they recommended themselves to him by ; their Religion chiefly consisted in them ; and they gave themselves Leave to be unrighteous, cruel and unmerciful, as may there be seen.

God abhors to see Men come cringing and crouching before him, bestowing a great Heap of the best Words upon him, and the worst upon themselves, and with dejected Countenances bemoaning themselves, and making lamentable Complaints of their Wickedness to him, imploring Mercy and Favour from him, &c. when they resolutely persist in Disobedience. So far are such things as these from being able to make Amends for any of their Sins, that God accounts them no better than Additions to their most heinous Impieties ; as by the sixty-sixth of *Isaiah* it further appears : it is said there, *He that killeth an Ox, is as if he slew a Man ; he that sacrificeth a Lamb, as if he cut off a Dog's Neck ; he that offereth an Oblation, as if he offered Swines Blood ; he that burneth Incense, as if he blessed an Idol.* And how came this to pass ? it follows : *They have chosen their own Ways, and their Soul delighteth in their Abominations.* So that if he had such an Opinion of the goodliest and most acceptable Sacrifices, when offered by disobedient and immoral Persons, under the *Law* ; it is impossible that he should have one Jot a better of the most affectionate Devotions of those that take no Care to be really and inwardly righteous, under the *Gospel*.

244 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. III.

And in being so, consists (as was said) the Soul and Life of Christianity.

Not that a *true Christian* can have undervaluing and slight Thoughts of the external Worship and Service of God; nor that he can contemn or neglect praying to him, singing his Praises, hearing or reading his Word, &c. Nothing less: for by the serious and diligent Performance of these and the like Duties, he comes to acquire and increase that good Temper of Soul that gives him the Denomination of such a one, through the Assistance of the divine Grace. He is one, to speak in the Words of *Hierocles*, as *σπεδάζειν ἂν εὐχεται, καὶ εὐχεται ἂν σπεδάζειν*, joins Endeavours to Prayers, and Prayers also (with the other Parts of divine Worship) to his other Endeavours.

And besides, the solemn Acknowledgments of God, both in publick and private, are Expressions of natural Justice. *Quid aliud est Pietas* (says Tully) *quàm Justitia adversus Deos?* What is Piety or Devotion but Justice towards God? And each of the Significations of it, whether natural or positive, they are *Payments of a Due to him*; so that Men cannot be so much as *honest*, and omit the honouring of the divine Majesty by them. But it is certain that these Performances do him no Honour at all, any otherwise than as they proceed from a good and sincere Soul. And to this Purpose our often recited Philosopher^k has

^k *Hierocles's Comments on Pythagoras's Golden Verses.*

this

Chap. XIV. *The Design of Christianity.* 245

this other excellent Saying, *viz. The greatest Abundance and profusest Costliness of Oblations bring no Honour to God, except they are offered with a divine Mind: for the Gifts and Sacrifices of Fools are but Food for the Fire. Sacrifices* in ancient Times were called the *Food* of Almighty God, as being Provision made for his House; but (says this Philosopher) when they proceed from Fools (or wicked Men) they are at best but the *Fire's Meat*: they signify nothing to God, and are merely thrown away.

And indeed the best intelligible and most significant Honour that our devoutest Services bring to God, is by their being a Means of making us more *like* to him. And as I shewed, out of the learned Master *Smith's* Treatise, *how God most glorifieth himself*, so I think it not amiss to transcribe more Lines of that worthy Person, wherein he excellently shews *how we must glorify God*; and they immediately follow the former. *As God's seeking his own Glory* (says he, Page 409.) *in respect of us is most properly the flowing forth of his Goodness upon us; so our seeking the Glory of God is most properly our endeavouring a Participation of his Goodness, and an earnest incessant pursuing after divine Perfection. When God becomes so great in our Eyes, and all created things so little, that we reckon upon nothing as worthy of our Aims or Ambitions but a serious Participation of the divine Nature, and the Exercise of divine Virtues, Love, Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, Kindness,*

246 *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. III.

Goodness, and the like: when the Soul beholding the infinite Beauty and Loveliness of the Divinity, and then looking down and beholding all created Perfection mantled over with Darkness, is ravished into Love and Admiration of that never-setting Brightness, and endeavours after the greatest Resemblance of God in Justice, Love, and Goodness: when conversing with him is *ἰσχυρὸν ἰμασθῆναι*, by a secret feeling of the Virtue, Sweetness, and Power of his Goodness, we endeavour to assimilate ourselves to him: then we may be said to glorify him indeed. God seeks no Glory but his own, and we have none of our own to give him. God in all things seeks himself and his own Glory, as finding nothing better than himself; and when we love him above all things, and endeavour to be most like him, we declare plainly that we count nothing better than he is.

And this same excellent Notion the Pythagoreans (however they came by it) did also teach. It was one of their Sayings, *Thou wilt best glorify God, by assimilating and making thy Mind like to God.*

And I will trouble the Reader with one more of our Philosopher's Sayings, which is no less worthy of his Observation than any of the past recited ones, viz. *Thou canst not honour God in giving ought to him, but by becoming a meet and worthy Person to receive from him.* See Hierocles's *Comment. in Aur. Carm.* Page 22.

And the great Oracle of Truth, our blessed Saviour, has assured us, that, *Herein is his Father glo-*

Chap. XIV. *The Design of Christianity.* 247

glorified, that we bear much Fruit¹; that we are fruitful in all Holiness. And we learn from St. Paul, *Phil. i. 11.* That they are the *Fruits of Righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ* (or the Effects of his Grace and Holy Spirit) which redound to the Praise and Glory of God. And then we praise him most significantly and effectually, when we are filled (as there he prays the *Philippians* may be) with these Fruits: when Righteousness takes Possession of our Souls, grows and encreases in them, and exerts itself in our Lives (as it must needs do wheresoever it is) and our whole Conversation shines with it.

In short; *Circumcision is nothing, and Uncircumcision is nothing*, (neither any Opinions, nor Performances, nor Forbearances, which have no Influence upon the Soul and Spirit, are any thing;) but the keeping the Commandments of God. This is all in all. In Christ Jesus nothing at all availeth but such a Faith as works by Love (*δι' αγάπης ἐνέργειαν*, or is perfected by Charity) and a new Creature. And if any Man be in Christ he is a new Creature; and whosoever is a new Creature, is in Christ, or a real Christian. All which St. Paul hath plainly taught us, in *1 Cor. vii. 19.* *Gal. v. 6.* *2 Cor. v. 17.* Those in whom the Design of the Gospel hath taken good Effect, are indeed Christians, and none but such: in the Success of that must needs lie the Power of Christi-

¹ John v. 18.

248. *The Design of Christianity.* Sect. III.
anity, and in nothing else. And therefore who-
soever they are in whom the genuine Effects of
Righteousness and true Holiness are conspicuous,
we ought to look upon them as living Members
of that Body whereof Christ is the Head. Who-
ever are ready to profess their Faith in God, and
Christ, and the Holy Spirit, in all Scripture Phrases
(without perverting their manifest and apparent
Sense) and lead a Life answerable (for ought we
can discern) to the clear Imitations of our Savi-
our's Will, and all the Rules plainly laid down
in his holy Gospel, (though it should not be their
Fortune to concur with us in all our Sentiments)
it is our Duty to judge them to be endued with
all the Essentials, and integral Parts of Christia-
nity, and to carry ourselves towards them accord-
ingly : or we shall offer them too great a Tempta-
tion to suspect that we ourselves are ignorant
wherein they consist, and for all our great Pro-
fession are void of them.

There is one thing more which I cannot for-
bear to add concerning the weighty and most
important Point we are now discoursing, and
which contains the Sum of all that need to
be said about it, viz. That it is impossible we
should not have the *Design of Christianity* ac-
complished in us, and therefore that we should
be destitute of the Power thereof, if we make
our Saviour's most excellent Life (with a short Ac-
count of which we have been in this Treatise
presented) the *Pattern of our Lives* ; if we write
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Chap. XIV. *The Design of Christianity.* 249

after that fair Copy he has therein set us, if we tread in his blessed Steps, and be such, according to our Measure and Capacity, as we have understood he was in this World. Those that sincerely and industriously endeavour to imitate the holy Jesus in his Spirit and Actions, can never be ignorant what it is to be truly Christians; nor can they fail to be so. And if the History of his Life were more perused and minded, and if it were more seriously considered, that he designed to be therein our Example (as both he and his Apostles have often enough assured us he did) it could not possibly be that the *Design* of his Gospel, and that wherein consists the Power of Godliness and Soul of Christianity, should be so miserably mistaken, as we see it is, by such a Multitude of those who are *called* Christians.

The Conclusion.

WHAT remains now, but that we sedulously, and with the greatest Concern, betake ourselves to find that, which has been proved to be the *Design of Christianity*, accomplished in our own Hearts and Lives.

That we endeavour above all things, *to walk worthy of the Vocation* wherewith we are called; and that *our Conversation be as becometh the Gospel*
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of Christ: and by that means make it appear to ourselves and others, that we are not in the Number of those wretched Souls, on whom the Knowledge of the most incomparable Religion is thrown away, and bestowed to very ill, or to no Purpose.

That we place the *Kingdom of God* not in *Word*, but in *Power*; and our Christianity not in letting our Tongues loose, but in bridling both them and our exorbitant Affections.

That we make less Noise, be less *disputations*, and more *obedient*; that we *talk* and *cavil* less, and *be* and *live* better: as well knowing, that an objecting, quarrelsome, and wrangling Humour, serves to no better End, than eating out the Heart and Life of all true Religion.

Let us exercise ourselves unto real and substantial Godliness, and in keeping our Consciences void of Offence both towards God and towards Men; and in studying the Gospel to enable us not to *discourse*, or only to *believe*; but also, and above all things to *do well*.

Let us esteem Christianity a Principle of such Vigour, Spriteliness and Activity, as to be assured of nothing more, than that it cannot possibly *be* where it does not *act*; and that the Lives of those that are indued with it cannot but bear Witness to the Force of it.

Let us do what lies in us to convince our *Infidels*, that the Religion of the blessed Jesus is no Trick or Device; and our *wanton and loose Christians*,

fiants, that it is no *notional* Business, or *speculative* Science, by letting them see what it has produced in ourselves: by shewing them how sober and temperate, how chaste, how severely just, how meek and peaceable, how humble, how patient and submissive to the Will of God, how loving and charitable, what Contemners of this World, and Confiders in God, we are enabled to be by the Power of it.

Let us declare that we are not mere Professors of Faith in Christ Jesus, by doing Acts worthy of such a Faith: that we are not barely Reliers on Christ's Righteousness, by being Imitators of it, *by being righteous as he was righteous*: that we truly believe the Christian Doctrine, by chearfully complying with the Christian Precepts. Hereby let us know that we *indeed* know him, that we keep his Commandments^m.

By our Care thus to do shall our Minds (as hath been shewn) be enlightened in all necessary Truth. It was by their Care to *do* the *Will* of God, that the primitive Christians obtained the right *Knowledge* of itⁿ. And there is no such Method for the acquiring of all useful Knowledge as this is.

By this means shall we also be kept constant in the true Profession of the Faith. The *Obe-*

^m John ii. 3.

ⁿ Ποιῶντες τὸ θέλημα τῷ Θεῷ τὸ θέλημα γινώσκομεν.
Clem. Alexandrin. Stromat. Lib. 1. Page 288.

obedient are the only Christians that are out of Danger even of a total Apostacy ; nor can there be any sure Hold of any one that is not obedient. He whose great Design is to keep the Commandments of God, and his Son Jesus, is the only solid, stable and settled Man. Our Saviour has likened him unto a *wise Man which built his House upon a Rock*, which, notwithstanding that the Rain descended, and Floods came, and the Winds blew, and all beat upon it, fell not, *because it was founded upon a Rock* . And on the contrary he has compared those that *hear*, but *do not* his Sayings, to a *foolish Man which built his House upon the Sands* ^p ; which, when assaulted by a Tempest, fell ; and *great was the Fall of it*. 'Tis no strange thing to see a very highly *professing*, if he be not as conscientiously *living* a Christian, tossed up and down like a Wave of the Sea, and carried away with every Wind of Doctrine : but so will not the *obedient* Person be. He may ('tis confessed) alter his Opinion in the *less weighty* and *more obscurely delivered* Points, but to those which belong to the main *Body* and *Substance* of Christianity, and are *plainly* revealed, as all such are, he will inseparably adhere.

By this means will our Knowledge be sanctified and made useful, but without the Care of Obedience it will be utterly unprofitable, nay, of very hurtful and mischievous Consequence.

^o Mat. vii. 24.

^p Verse 26.

Whatsoever Christian Knowledge is not impregnated with answerable Goodness, but is unaccompanied with Christian Practice, is not only an *insipid* and *jejune*, but also a *flatulent* thing, that instead of *nourishing* is apt to swell and *puff up* the Souls of Men; I mean, to make them proud and highly opinionated of their own Worth, censorious and Contemnners of other People, and of a conceited and pragmatical, a contentious and unpeaceable Behaviour. And there is no Man but may observe too too many of our great Pretenders to Christianity unhappily exemplifying, and demonstrating by their Practices, this sad Truth.

By this means shall we convince Gainfayers more than by any Arguments: but they are never like to be persuaded that our *Judgments* are *orthodox*, while they perceive our *Conversations* to be *heretical*. Wicked Men are a great Discredit to any Party they side with, and do it mighty Disservice. I wish we of the Church of *England* did not know this by very woeful Experience. And on the other Hand, a good Life cannot but be of exceeding great Force to draw Dissenters to the embracing of our Religion. We see that mere Pretences to great Sanctity do strangely make Profelytes to several Forms, that have nothing besides to set them off. And as for obstinate Persons, who are peremptorily resolved that they will by no means be prevailed with to come over to us, they will, however, be greatly disabled
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from reproaching our Religion, when they are convinced that it hath excellent Effects on the Professors of it: or at least, neither their Reproaches, nor any Attempts whatsoever against it, could then ever have Success, or be able to do any thing to its considerable Prejudice. Nor would that idle and senseless Talk, whereby some hot People endeavour to prove us an *anti christian Church*, be by many, if by any, listened to, could they discern among us more *Christian Lives*: could they be once satisfied that we esteem it our principal Interest and Concernment, to make ourselves and others really and *substantially* good. *So is the Will of God* (saith St. Peter ⁹) *that with well-doing ye may put to Silence the Ignorance of foolish Men.*

By this means shall we pass chearfully through this sad World; and in the midst of our Thoughts within us, will solid Comforts delight our Souls. Little do those think of what Happiness they deprive themselves, even in *this* Life, who place their Religion in any thing more than in an universal Respect to their Saviour's Precepts. There is no true Christian that needs to be told, that the more careful he is to *obey God*, the more sweetly he enjoys himself: nor, that a virtuous and holy Life several Ways brings in a constant Revenue of Peace and Pleasure; even such as no earthly thing can afford any that deserves to be

⁹ 1 Pet. ii. 15.

named with it. Every good Man feels that Christ's Yoke is not less *pleasant* than *easy*, nor his Burthen more *light* than *delightful*: and that *all his Ways* are, upon many Accounts, *Ways of Pleasantness*, and *all his Paths Peace*. So that, were there no other Reward to be hoped for, but what daily attends them, it would be most unquestionably our Interest to walk in them, and to forsake all other for them: and there is no one of Christ's Disciples that by *Experience* understands what his blessed Master's Injunctions are, who would be contented to be eased, though he might, of them: or that would accept of a *Quietus* from performing the Duties required by him, though he should have it offered him, even with the *Broad Seal* of Heaven (which is impossible to be supposed) affixed to it.

But, Lastly, by this means shall we obtain, when we depart hence, *the End of our Faith, even the Salvation of our Souls*, and arrive at a most happy and glorious Immortality. By the Pursuance of real and universal Righteousness shall we certainly obtain the *Crown of Righteousness*, which our righteous Redeemer hath purchased for us, and *God the righteous Judge* will give unto us^r. An *exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory* we shall assuredly reap, if we faint not, and be not weary of well-doing.

Glory, Honour, and Peace are the undoubted Portion of every Soul that worketh good^s. And

^r 2 Tim. iv.

^s Rom. ii. 10.

256 *The Design of Christianity.*

Blessed are they that do his Commandments, for they have Right to the Tree of Life, and shall enter thro' the Gates into the City ^t.

But if, on the contrary, we foolishly satisfy ourselves with an *ineffectual* Faith in Christ, a *notional* Knowledge and *empty* Profession of his Religion, or a merely *external* and *partial* Righteousness; these will be so far from intitling us to the *exceeding great and precious Promises* of the Gospel, that they (at least the three former) will much heighten our Misery in the World to come, and excessively aggravate our Condemnation.

Let us hear the Conclusion of the whole Matter: Fear God, and keep his Commandments (from a Principle of Love to him and them) for this is the whole of (the Christian) Man.

^t Rev. xxii. 14.

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